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J. A. FROUDE

„ZETA"

SHADOWS OF THE CLOUDS

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SHADOWS

OF

THE CLOUDS.

BY ZETA.

LONDON:
JOHN OLLIVIER, 59, PALL MALL.
1847.

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Homines se liberos esse opinantur quando quidem suarum volitionum suique appetitûs sunt conscii e de causis a quibus disponuntur ad appetendum et volendum quia earum sunt ignari ne per somnium cogitant.

SPINOZA. *Ethics.*

Wer mit dem Leben spielt
Kömmt nie zurecht,
Wer nicht sich selbst befiehlt
Bleibt immer ein Knecht.

GOETHE.

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SHADOW OF THE CLOUDS.

THE SPIRIT'S TRIALS.

Mr. Hardinge was a clergyman; he had a living in the central part of England; but lying as it did exposed unhealthily to the malaria from the marshes of the Ouse, his wife's health had obliged him to be a non-resident, and for many years they had led a wandering life together from curacy to curacy. Mrs. Hardinge's body, like infirm minds tired easily with what was familiar to it, and craved for novelty. They seldom stayed longer at any one place than was enough to enable them to carry away the heart of every

creature that had come in contact with them, a silver sugar-basin, or cream jug, and one more addition to their family circle.

Mr. Hardinge had been distinguished at college; but he had married immediately on leaving it, and his nature had rather led him to shed himself outwards, in acts of kindness to his fellow creatures, than to submit his mind to any laborious discipline in the study of divines and philosophers. . . . . The characteristic feature in him was benevolence—benevolence full, prompt, active, without a tinge of maudlin in it, yet so extensive that it could reach to sympathy even with a broken flower. I have known him lend his cloak to a beggar in a storm on a wild moor, and content himself with a mere promise it should be brought back to him. The repeated experience of men's unworthiness through twenty years of life among them as a clergyman, had not made him distrustful, or even admit the possibility of the promise being broken. A drive with Mr. Hardinge was a serious undertaking; not a snail or a worm if he saw them (and on these occasions he was wonderfully sharp-sighted) might be left in the road for fear that

somebody might hurt them: not a stone of common bigness for fear it might hurt somebody. I remember once his falling in with some boys who were drowning a cat in a pond by the road side. As persuasion produced no effect, he said he would buy it of them, and offered them half-a-crown; the young rascals took the money, and ran off, telling him he might go fetch the creature out of the water for himself. And he did. . . . But an instance of this kind never made him think the worse, or he more suspicious, of people generally. It lumped itself up with the abstract wickedness he preached against on Sundays. He abhorred wickedness, but he seldom or never abhorred people for being wicked, he could not believe any one he came in contact with to be so. . . . . So that it must be pretty plain that of what is called knowledge of the world he had very little. . . . He believed of course that there was badness growing, plenty of it, but he could not suspect any one he knew to have any badness. Men of base minds always estimate others by themselves, and whenever a selfish interested motive can be found for anything any one has done, that motive they are sure must have been the motive, because they have never

acted themselves from any other. Mr. Hardinge exactly inverted this rule, because he was good, because he never felt even the most fleeting cloud of selfishness throw a shadow over his mind, he thought the best of any action that fell under his notice, as long as it was possible to entertain a doubt

This natural tendency was very much heightened by a misforfortune which befel him about his thirty-eighth year, in the termination of a gradually increasing disorder in almost total deafness. Thus a physical infirmity coming into the help of disposition, he was farther than ever from being able to form correct judgments of people. Hitherto he had been forced to know something from what he could not avoid hearing. Conversation going on about him must have told him at any rate what other people thought, and even in their conversation with himself they could not be for ever on their guard. But it is different when so much effort is required—you cannot well be intemperate or selfish or worldly down a speaking trumpet. . . . . And so it came to pass that, shut up in himself, and in his own pure and noble thoughts and feelings, he loved his fellow-creatures too well to look

at them as anything else than a mirror where he saw all his own goodness reflected and believed it was theirs.

Of the great multitude of the mixed characters of good and ill, neither wholly good nor wholly bad, but for ever oscillating between the two, with a negative and a positive, a selfish and a generous motive for almost all they do; of the difficulties which are thrown in men's way from the artificial structure of society, the conflicting temptations, the fluctuating judgment of public opinion, of all the thousand complicated threads and fibres which draw men up and down, and do really so very seriously affect the character for goodness or badness, of all the actions that are done under them, Mr. Hardinge knew nothing. . . . Right and wrong with him stood each with a rigid outline; there was no shading off of one into the other by imperceptible degrees; if a thing was clearly bad it was bad altogether, and if he was called upon to form a judgment of the person, he was a bad man who did it. He had his own high lofty rule of thought and action, but it was inflexible—that the rule of right and wrong could bend was no article of his creed. Once convince him that

any one he knew had done an immoral action, and the avenues of his heart were closed to him for ever. Evil, in its abstract form, was so loathsome to him, and in its concrete so little familiar, that if ever he was obliged to transfer the judgment he had of the general to the particular, it was transferred whole. He could make no allowance, and the abhorrence he would feel after, would be in proportion to the love he had felt before. Mr. Hardinge did not know the infinite variety of natures men received at the hands of Providence, he had never studied the strange laws which govern the moulding of them into characters, he had no idea that the same temptation acts as variously on different men, as the same temperature on metals and gases; that all these things must infinitely modify our judgment on the sinfulness of the individual that falls before them, and as infinitely the degree of moral injury such fall will inflict on his character. . . . . So that it will be seen that however we may admire Mr. Hardinge standing alone; however wonderfully beautiful he might be, as an inhabitant of Paradise, his was not a character to work well among his fellow-creatures; he was likely to bestow his affection

unworthily, to give all when only some was deserved, to withhold all when some should have remained; and as the warmth of his nature prompted him to immediate and precipitate action, we shall not be surprised in the sequel of the story to find one more proof that in so intricate a world the simple-minded cannot walk innocuously in their simple-mindedness; that benevolence, undirected by knowledge, may do untold evil, in the unwise pursuit of good. . . . . The wounds we receive from bad men, deserved or undeserved, are soon healed again; but when a good man strikes, and there is no cause, the wound is poisoned.

CHAPTER II.

At the time my story begins the Hardinges were living in Wales; they were fond of mountain countries. They had tried all parts of England; but they were never happy away from the lakes, and rocks, and hills. People of strong feeling and not highly cultivated, generally breathe most freely where nature is the only artist; and moreover, whoever is fond of mountains at all is fond of them with a passion, because they are so individual. Each one of the great giants has his own form, his own features, and his own name, and he winds round and round your heart like a human being with a soul in him, and you love him as an old friend. The pine woods, and cliffs, and waterfalls, become as we grow among them as it were a part of our mind; they have done so much to educate us, we reverence them

as our greatest teachers of wisdom; while every single scene is of so clear and so marked a kind, and it hardly ever fails to be inseparably twined in with some bright and sunny recollection. Besides they are so unchanging. To a thoughtful mind like Mr. Hardinge's, which is ever looking for God, in all God's world around him, fit emblems they are, in changing scenes, among changing men, of Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Mr. Hardinge used to talk of the everlasting hills. It was his nearest approach to irony when he would point to the cloud on Cadir Idis, and bid us think how just so, the great giant had curtained himself in his chair, in the old world before the flood; just so the grim mountain had frowned in the gathering storm-cloud of the old deluge, or so smiled between tears and gladness in the sunshine before the retiring waters. There sleeps the enchanted Arthur, there wrung the mailed heel of Glendower, above the valley where the modern traveller rolls along his iron road in fire-winged chariot. We poor lords of the creation, what a silly dance he has watched us lead here, down under him; so loud, so noisy, as it all was, and sweeping away without an echo. Yet there sits

he so calm, so serene, so silent; as he smiles on us, so by-and-bye he will smile on our children's children; and there he will be for the last end, when the smoke-clouds of the burning world shall wreathe him in his shroud.

It was within sight of Cadir Mr. Hardinge was living, in a large old house, called Morlands, a few miles below Machrynnleth, at the head of the long salt-water lake at the mouth of the Dovey river. His family had been completed some eight years, and now consisted of four daughters and three sons; besides these were two or three young pupils; in all the brightest, merriest, sunniest party, and, considering Mr. Hardinge's knowing anything about it was totally out of the question, not exceedingly noisy, ... Except indeed, when the porridge bowl came on the table, and then there was a splendid scramble. It was quite beautiful to see them and sit with them at a meal-time; the fathers full, round sweet face, smiling so fondly over them all, with goodness beaming off from it on all he shone upon, like light and heat from off the sun. Of the children, of what they were, and their way of bringing up, I might write much. I must content myself with a little. Born with

all their father's exuberant kindliness, and all their mother's grace, they had grown up together in the most natural atmosphere in the world. It seemed as if none of them had ever known any inclination to do wrong, for you never heard a 'You shall not,' or a 'You must not.' They said their ten commandments certainly; but then like healthy children they attached no meaning at all to them in their negative form, and understood them only as they are interpreted into a directer shape in the catechism explanation. To be sure, they were let to do almost everything they pleased that was not wrong. It was no part of the Morlands plan to impose restraints for their own sake as a discipline of obedience; it seemed at any rate as if all the best which people purpose to gain by such means had been lavished on the young Hardinges by nature. . . . . There was a school-room, where they contrived to assimilate a certain quantity of desultory information; but there was not the least attempt at strictness of rules. . . . . All they did, all they got, seemed to flow out of themselves, as if it could not help it; just as they grew up they were left to stand: fine young healthy fruit-trees, that never knew the pruning

hook. The wonder was they did not degenerate and grow weeds, but they did not. The boys were rather rough certainly, shaggy, like mountain ponies; but well-bred, and clean-limbed, mind and body—you could see at a glance that clipped they would show admirably. . . . . This was as boys—as men who are to take a place in professions, and in the business of life, it is to be feared there will be a deficiency, unless they have talent of a most uncommon kind. A man requires a certain quantity of positive acquirements merely to be a fully developed man: and they will have to be working up the lost ground at the expense of their professions; but this by the way; they were boys at the time I am speaking of. . . . . Now for the girls. . . . The eldest was about twenty, the second two years younger, the other two children. . . . . From the way these last went on one might form a sort of conjecture what had been the education of the elder ones; tossing in the swing, rolling their hoops along the grass-plat, and wielding rake and pitchfork in the hay season: at twelve or thirteen they could row a boat against their brothers; and if it had not been for the inconvenient frock they could have played cricket, or

run races up the mountain against either of them. Luckily they all inherited a liking for drawing and music, They could spell out a little French, but it was very troublesome to have to look the same word out so many times, and altogether it was little to their taste; but they learnt music enough to play and sing the wild Welsh airs—and drawing in a rudish style they succeeded well with. They loved drawing, for they loved their lakes and mountains, and it was a way in which they could appropriate them to themselves. I paid a visit a short time since to some of the old cottages in the neighbourhood, and I found the walls hung round with the Miss Hardinges, sketches. . . . . Such was their education. evincing the most shocking deficiency in all its most essential, even elementary acquirements. So that by what possible way they justified themselves in being the fascinating creatures they were I must leave them to tell. . . . . Just at the time when the girl passed into the woman, exactly at the right crisis, the change came; their foot was as light as ever on the mountain-side; their hand as ready in the hay-field, but the romping air they had as children passed away for ever. The laugh was as buoyant, the eye as

bright and sunny, but the gracefulness they had inherited from their mother rounded out the ruder angles of their girlishness into soft flowing lines of beauty, and moulded them into a form as easy and perfect as the most highly-finished art could have done; the elegance of nature was more perfect in them than in any women I ever saw, and when this is so it has the advantage of all art; because it does really come, and does not only seem to come, directly from within.

Altogether they were a perplexing family; one had never met with perfect people; one did not believe in perfect people—at least not in a perfection that would blow without care or culture like a wild rose in the hedge-row; and yet one could find nothing at all about them that one could wish to be different. They would do many out of the way things; many things that with any one else one would have felt doubtful about; but it was impossible to doubt with them. . . . . With those bright, clear, unconscious eyes of theirs, they might do what they pleased, and in them it would be right. It seemed as if for once Nature had forgot herself; and the spirit of sin which hangs over the birth throes, and pours itself through every baby's

veins as it breaks into mortality, had shrunk from its unlovely office, and once again let old Earth welcome children to her bosom as pure as those she once wondered at under the palm trees of Paradise.

CHAPTER III.

It was summer; the beginning of the long vacation. Aberdovey was a favourite place for reading parties from the university. The lake —the sea—the trout in the river—the snipe and duck in the long marshes—the beautiful scenery, and the pleasant, kind, hospitable Welsh gentlemen seldom failed to prove attractive to the numerous class of young students who prefer the society of their friends and their unrestrained amusements (even though accompanied with the presence of a nominal tutor, who has no control over them) to the uninteresting companionship of their sisters and the restraints of home. Courtesy has rendered such parties respectable, by calling them reading parties. But I have myself been attached to several, in both capacities of tutor and pupil,

and I cannot say my own experience could justify the name as more than an honorary title. Let the reading part of them, however, be as it may, they are certainly pleasant enough, and profitable enough in other ways; on the whole the pleasantest summers I have to look back upon.

It is a fine hot morning in August, 183—, some hours after post time. Edward Fowler is seen plunging up and down the deep dry sand road in a state denoting a frame of mind anything but harmonizing with the volume of Aristotle under his arm. An open letter is in his hand, into which from time to time he is flinging bewildered glances, and then dashing his foot into the sand, as if he is craving to annihilate somebody, and is not at all particular who.

"Come, Fowler," a voice calls out of the window of one of the lodging-houses, "it is ten o'clock. . . . past. . . . I shall see you this morning at any rate. You promised faithfully, you know, you would be regular this week, when you went up the lake on Friday. Where is the rhetoric?"

"The devil take the rhetoric!"

"What! you are not going to cut me again?" And Sterming's face looked longer out of the window, and his voice sounded really distressed.

"O Sterming, dear Sterming, you can do me a thousand times more service if you'll come and read this, and teach me some rhetoric to use to my father."

It seemed clear enough to Sterming that there was occasion now for his services rather as a man than as a tutor; and as the atmosphere of Aristotle had not yet quite withered his sympathies, he went. A kind word was everything just then to poor Fowler; as soon as he had found an older friend to listen to them, he fancied himself almost clear of his difficulties.

The letter which had produced this outbreak was simple and laconic enough. Canon Fowler had heard from some of his own friends in the neighbourhood, that while he thought Edward was hard at work over Aristotle and Thucydides, he was spending more than half his time at Morland with the Hardinges. Canon Fowler, with his plain businesslike way of looking at things, was of all the men I ever met in this world the very last to sympathize in a boy of

twenty's love affairs. He told him very briefly he understood he was making an ass of himself, and unless he could hear a satisfactory account of what he was about, he should write to Mr. Sterming, and desire him to send him home immediately. . . . Nothing could be more reasonable, or more natural, and might, without any great difficulty, have been believed to have been dictated by a real desire for Edward's real good. . . . But a reasonable view of things was the very last Edward could ever take of anything. . . . The impulse of the moment was to him a divine command; and though the impulse of the next week might be the contradictory of this, each was alike sacred, and it was sacrilege to disobey. . . . No, his father had always grudged him the slightest enjoyment, and now that the sunlight of the highest happiness was just beginning to dawn upon him, he was to be torn from it for ever. It was always so—it was his fate. It was all desperate. But let Sterming only look at the postscript.

It appeared that Mr. Hardinge's father had been in confinement, and Canon Fowler had reason to believe that insanity was hereditary in their family. By way of softening the peremp-

toriness of his letter, he had added this as a reason why he could not allow Edward to look forward towards, at any future time, marrying into it. It was very kindly meant; because it would at once put an end to the thing, and prevent its being lingered out by hopes to die a more painful, more protracted death. . . . He believed he knew his son well enough to be sure the whole thing was nothing but a freak, which in the end would die of itself; and it was better to save the Hardinges from an affair which was so certain to be distressing. . . . But the effect produced on Edward was exactly the opposite of what was intended; he had the strangest knack, if any body crossed his wishes, of taking the stick by the burnt end. . . . It happened, unluckily, that there was already a degree of uncomfortableness in the Fowler family from a precisely similar matter. The eldest brother wished to marry a lady to whom the Canon had the same objection; and of course the younger part of the family were all enlisted against their father. . . . . "It is always the same," Edward said. "He cares for none of us. I believe he would think himself well rid of us if we were dead." . . . And Sterming's remon-

strances were easily silenced by a "You don't know my father."

The question was, however, what was to be done? Sterming was really a very kind-hearted fellow, and, being younger, could sympathize in the cause of the distress. It was clear it was no joking matter; at least just then joking would do no good, and only irritate. However, he must know more before he could undertake to advise, and he looked up inquiringly. The flood-gates of poor Fowler's heart were gone clean down, and out it all came pouring. He had known the Hardinges before, it seemed, when they had been in Somersetshire. In all he had spent several weeks in their house, and the young ladies had been twice at his father's at Darling. . . . Being such a youth as we have described him, of course he had fallen in love with Emma Hardinge, and he had really good qualities enough, or interesting qualities enough, to gain her affections in return. That the family had settled at Morlands was the principal reason of his having attached himself to Sterming's Aberdovery reading party: and on the expedition up the lake, to which his tutor had somewhat reproachfully alluded, he had said, or

fancied he had said, so much to Emma, that he could not leave her now without being more explicit; or at any rate without some explanation.

I cannot take a better opportunity than while he and Sterming are talking on the sands, of giving some account of Fowler's earlier history. . . . He told it me himself long after this, but it appears to me that with him (perhaps more or less with every one) if early life is made the mirror where the after life is shown, the distortion of each will be found to correspond and correct each other; and so, and so only, can a real image of him as he was be arrived at. . . . But if this be not so, Fowler's history is remarkable, and, without doubt, I think, deserves some attention for itself.

I take it to be a matter of the most certain experience in dealing with boys of an amiable infirm disposition, that exactly the treatment they receive from you they will deserve. In a general way it is true of all persons of unformed character who come in contact with you as your inferiors, although with men it cannot be relied on with the same certainty, because their feelings are less powerful, and their habit of moving

this way or that way under particular circumstances more determinate. But with the very large class of boys of a yielding nature who have very little self-confidence, are very little governed by a determined will or judgment, but sway up and down under the impulses of the moment, if they are treated generously and trustingly, it may be taken for an axiom that their feelings will be always strong enough to make them ashamed not to deserve it. Treat them as if they deserved suspicion, and as infallibly they soon actually will deserve it. People seem to assume that to be governed by impulse means only 'bad impulse,' and they endeavour to counteract it by trying to work upon the judgment, a faculty which these boys have not got, and so cannot possibly be influenced by it. There never was a weak boy yet that was deterred from doing wrong by ultimate distant consequences, he was to learn from thinking about them. It is idle to attempt to manage him otherwise than by creating and fostering generous impulses to keep in check the baser ones. And the greatest delicacy is required in effecting this. It is not enough to do a substantial good. Substantial good is often dry or repulsive on the surface;

and must be *understood* to be valued; just, again, what boys are unable to do. . . . Strong natures may understand and value the reality. Women, and such children as these, will not be affected by it, unless it shows on the surface what is in the heart. Provided you will do it with a kind, sympathizing manner, you may do what you please with them, otherwise nothing you do will affect them at all. . . . I say it is a fact in human nature that vast numbers of people are so constituted—born so. I am not saying it would not be better if they were otherwise; but they are not. It is idle to be ideal and utopian. You must make what you can of things as they are. And yet in this matter of educating, there are no persons more blindly theoretic and ideal than your practical men of understanding, who bring up every body on what they call their few broad principles of plain common sense.

If fathers could but know, or could but let themselves be taught, how many sleepless nights of anxiety they would save themselves—how many a naturally well-intentioned child they would save from sorrow and suffering and guilt, by but taking the trouble now and then to find

a few kind words to express the real kindness which in their hearts they feel! You will find many fathers—substantially kind and good fathers—whose single guide in all they do for their children is the highest, most imperious sense of duty. It is far rarer to find one who, in the little private relations of common life, will throw them a kind word or a kind smile. Poor Ned Fowler! I remember him showing me, with tears in his eyes, the spot in the garden at Darling, where he had listened to the last genuine hearty words his father had ever addressed to him. It was the merest trifle, a flower-bed, where, as a little boy, he was driving in a stick to bind up a refractory carnation; but the 'Well done, Ned,' (it was the last time he had called him Ned,) had rung on the single, soft sweet note among weary years of discord.

Edward was the youngest of a family of eight. A talent of itself unhealthily precocious was most unwisely pushed forward and encouraged out by everybody, by teachers and schoolmaster, from the vanity of having a little monster to display as their workmanship, by his father, because

he was anxious for the success of his children in life, and the quicker they got on the better; they would the sooner assume a position. . . . It had struck no one there might be a mistake about it. No one could have ever cared to see even if it were possible there might, on five minutes' serious talk with the boy, or to have listened to his laugh, would have shown the simplest of them they were but developing a trifling quickness of faculty; that the power which should have gone for the growth of the entire tree was being directed off into a single branch, which was swelling to disproportioned magnitude, while the stem was quietly decaying. . . . As to the character of the entire boy, his temper, disposition, health of tone in heart and mind, all that was presumed. It made no show at school exhibitions, and at least directly assumed no form of positive importance as regarded after life. So this was all left to itself. Of course, if a boy knew half the Iliad by heart at ten, and had construed the Odyssey through at eleven, all other excellences were a matter of course. . . He was naturally timid, and shrunk from all the amusements and games of other boys. So much the better, he would keep to his books. . .

He was undergrown for his age, infirm, and unhealthy; and a disposition might have been observed in him even then, in all his dealings with other boys and with his master, to evade difficulties instead of meeting them—a feature which should have called for the most delicate handling, and would have far better repaid the time and attention which were wasted in forcing him beyond his years, in a few poor miserable attainments. . . . The consequence was, that when sent to a public school he was placed among boys four or five years his seniors, to live with them, and do their work, in school and out of school, with all the rest of him, except his mere acquirements, undergrown even for his own age. . . . His nature required treatment the most delicate, it received the very roughest. Contrary to the advice of several friends (for here some few did protest) he was pushed upon the Foundation at Westminster, where for one year at least to all boys, and to some for every year, the life was as hard, and the treatment as barbarous, as that of the negroes in Virginia. . . . What it may be now I do not know. I am speaking of what it was fifteen years ago. . . . The juniors in college have, however, in the

midst of their trials, a sympathy with one another which encourages and supports them, and helps them to bear their miserable life, and sometimes even draw good from it; years pass quickly, and each year will find them rising higher, and by-and-bye they will take their turns and be masters too.

But such comfort as this was denied to Edward Fowler. The older boys beat him, because being too young for the work he had to do as their slave, he could not do it. His own election were jealous of his supposed talents, and beat and tortured him too. Animal courage he had none. Moral courage he had never been trained in; and the consequence was, the poor boy was crushed. Every one's hand was against him. He had no open ways of escaping; so that he soon learnt to find ways that were not open. You might see him skulking along the walls and passages, mean, pitiful, and wretched-looking; right and wrong, truth and falsehood, honour and dishonour, grown all alike to him. The one honourable feeling which clung to him only served to perpetuate his misery. He could not bring himself to complain to the master of the way he was treated in college. . . . His life

was so wretched that, lawful or unlawful, anything that would give him momentary ease he would avail himself of. . . . No one believed what he said. No one could believe him; he had quite left off truth speaking. He used to invent excuses of illness, to escape from the wretchedness of college to the sanctuary of the sick-room at the boarding-house. This was soon found out, and the masters were foolish enough to treat him as if it was mere school he wished to shirk, instead of the young tyrants up the college stairs. They never even suspected the real cause, and repeated complaints to his father were the natural consequence.

Any one who has been at a public school knows how much a very little money adds to a schoolboy's small stock of comforts. . . . It did not add to Fowler's,—it made the whole; he had none else. . . . The scraped mutton bones and refuse fat would be thrown him for his dinner; if he did not like that he might go without and crawl off to some back room at the pastry-cook's. No wonder he had long bills there. And if by accident money not his own passed into his hands, it was not sure of coming clear of them again; at least on one occasion money

belonging to his brother was made away with. His bills at the boarding-house were large, so many days and weeks were spent there in the sick-room. His clothes were always torn and wretched; yet they cost more, and he had more of them, than other boys. His books were taken from him or torn to pieces out of wantonness, and more must be bought. . . . There is one more grave charge I must bring against this school of Westminster. Whether the authorities of the school were aware of the fact I am going to mention I do not know; but whether they were or not it was alike disgraceful to them. . . One of the established duties of a junior in college is to supply the seniors with stationery of every kind, and in the most reckless profusion. Knives, pencils, pens, paper, a daily tale to be daily delivered in. The bricks must be made, make them how they can, and not even stubble to burn them withal. There was no escape except by complaining, and that boys will never do. . . . To high-spirited boys it would never occur as a possibility, and the others will not do it from fear, for they know very well the master cannot, or will not, shelter them from all the consequences they would entail on themselves.

The general way the thing was managed was by a private bill at the stationer's, procured on an order from boys' parents when made acquainted with the circumstance. Ned Fowler, as good for nothing else, was always expected to have the largest supply of these things. He must supply the seniors, and he must supply his brother juniors too. He could not get them in the scramble as other boys could; so that his bill was four times as large as theirs. But he knew how little use it would be for him to apply at home for leave to have such a bill. He was too cowardly to face the beatings which would have ensued on his being unprovided with what was required, so that he represented to the stationers he *had* leave, when he neither had it nor had asked for it. I mention this to show how utterly mean he had become. . . . How he had become so I have partly shown. Whether he was likely to improve under such a system I need hardly inquire. If you beat a dog for every fault, and beat him for your pleasure when there is none, you do not commonly form a very amiable dog; and the evil is that it is so completely the habit of the world to judge a person for what they *are*, without trou-

bling themselves to inquire how they came to be so, that all people, good and bad, despised and disliked Fowler, and did not care to hide from him that they did. . . .

And it was little sympathy or kindness he could meet with from his friends at home. How was it possible that he could? with complaint upon complaint being all that reached them from the masters, and his own wretched character all they ever saw? . . His father held threats of removal over him. A threat of removal! As well threaten a prisoner on the rack with liberty. But then it was to be accompanied with a degradation which made even Westminster tolerable: he was to be sent off to a cheap school in Yorkshire, and from thence apprenticed to a trade. . . . It was a cruel thing this threatening, and, under all circumstances, as useless as it was cruel. Besides which Canon Fowler never meant it. . . . It was a way he had, and a most unlucky one, of always oversaying things, and particularly over-threatening. He forgot the boy was sure to take him literally —he forgot that *the fear which is without love* is the very worst, the very most fatal feeling a child can be brought to entertain towards his

father. The Canon soon forgot, too, the words he had used, and only remembered his own meaning, so that a large gulf of misunderstanding was gaping wider and wider between them; and what but a miracle could ever bridge it over? Once, and once only, had he complained of the way he was treated. . . . He wrote to his brother; but Ned's word experience had taught him was not good. All but wholly disbelieving him, he did, however, write to the under-master. . . . The under-master was a good upright man, but not a wise one—one who was well satisfied if all seemed right, and thought it better not to see many things he might have seen. He argued it was more likely that young Fowler should be telling lies, than that such things should be going on and he be unacquainted with them. William Fowler agreed with him, and there the matter ended. . . .

Well, Ned struggled on through his three years and became a senior: but nothing mended with him. He sneaked and shirked along the streets, with his head no higher at fifteen than it had been at twelve,—when he ceased to be a fag he was beaten for amusement. . . . The senior boys had places round the fire, and tea,

and many little luxuries; but there were none for Edward Fowler. His worst foes were those of his own election. He would crawl into college after dusk to his corner, and would sit silent in the dark on his bed, happy if each night he was permitted to creep into it unnoticed, or, what was the same thing with him unbeaten. Even when in bed his dangers were not ended. He might be seen sliding into school in the morning with a face all scarred and blistered for weeks and weeks together. The older boys stalking round college at midnight would pause as they passed him; one would hold him down while another would hold a lighted cigar stump against his cheek, till such time as it was clear pain would prevent his eyes from closing again that night at least. About the middle of his senior's year fresh matter of complaint from the head master brough matters to a crisis. His bills were as high as ever; he went home and did not return again. . . He was not sent to a Yorkshire school. . . . What *was* done was perhaps as bad. His father beat him himself, and afterwards kept him at home for two years; at the end of which time, from the way he was treated there, his home was little less loathsome

to him than school had been; and the last frail fibres that might have wound their hearts together were sundered now for ever. . . . Bill poured in after bill. The disastrous state of his wardrobe had to be discovered. The Canon's suspicions led him at once to conclude things were bought only to be unfairly made away with; he treated the boy as an accomplished swindler, and told him gravely if he lived to see him twenty-one he would see him transported. It had a strange effect on him this. . . . The one unworthy suspicion which he knew he did not deserve made him forget the many that he did; and the sullen, unhappy boy grew to fear his father and tremble before his father, almost as he had done before his tyrants at the school.

This very painful history Fowler told me himself. It will not be thought he has drawn a picture much to his own advantage, or that if he has coloured it, it has been with a brush which can only paint virtues, and throws every fault into indistinguishable shade. I must be allowed to add a few remarks upon it of my own. . . . If I have written it as if I meant to blame the persons who were concerned in this injudicious

treatment of him, I am very sorry. I mean nothing less. . . . In a scene so crowded as this world is, or as the little world of a public school is, with any existing machinery it is impossible to attend to minute shades of character. There is a sufficient likeness among boys to justify the use of general, very general laws indeed. They are dealt with in the mass. An average treatment is arrived at. If an exception does rise, and it happens to disagree, it is a pity, but it cannot be helped. God forbid, too, I should think of blaming Canon Fowler. He was a busy practical man of the world, far too much employed in being of active service to it to be able to spare time in attending minutely to peculiarities in the disposition of his children; and judging as people generally judge, and dealing with them on the methods usually in repute, after the few first steps all the rest seems to me quite natural, indeed inevitable. "Punish," not "prevent," is the old-fashioned principle. If a boy goes wrong whip him. Teach him to be afraid of going wrong, by the pains and penalties to ensue,—just the principle on which gamekeepers used to try to break dogs. . . But men learnt to use gentler methods soonest with

the lower animals. As to the effects of the treatment, results seem to show pretty much alike in both cases; but with the human animal an unhappy notion clung on to it, and still clings, and will perpetuate the principle and its disastrous consequences, that men and boys *deserve* their whipping, as if they could have helped doing what they did in a way dogs cannot. Whipping * is good, but whipping is not the best; there are times when it is the very worst. It would be well if people would so far take example from what they find succeed with their dogs, as to learn there are other ways at least as efficacious, and that the desired conduct is better if produced in *any* other way than in that. . . . Something better might have been made of Fowler. I knew him well in after life, and I am sure that if he had been observed more attentively, many traits would have been seen which would have given a clue to a better management of him. On the whole general rules should have no place in family education. It is just there, and there, perhaps, alone, that there are opportunities of studying

* I employ this word in a general sense, not limiting it to the application of birch.

shades of difference, and it should be the business of affection to attend to them. When affection is really strong it will be an equal security against indulgence and over-hasty severity.

Do not say what claim had Fowler on affection? Relationship is a claim, an artificial one if you like; but it is one of nature's artifices —to provide supply of love to those who else might perish for the lack of it. If any single person had been found to try and look whether some other explanation of what his son had become might not be found, instead of leaving it as mere unaccountable baseness, Canon Fowler would have been spared years of anxiety, and Edward a long catalogue of sins, and a fiery trial, in which he was purged of them.

The defect in Edward's nature, as I understand it, was that he was constitutionally a coward. Constitutionally, I say. It was not his own fault. Nature had ordered him so, just as she orders others constitutionally brave. One may like these the best, but one must be cautious how one praises them for what they have earned by no merit of their own. Courage of this kind—animal courage—is a gift, not an ac-

quirement. . . . Neither animal courage nor animal cowardice result from any principle, they are merely passions. . . . So different from moral courage and moral cowardice, that they seem to me to have nothing in common except the name. As far as I can judge from experience, each has about an equal chance of acquiring either. . . . The cowardly boy, if he is trained, or trains himself, to get his nature under the control of reason, will hold that passion in equal check with the rest. . . . The bold boy may give himself the rein, and fall before every other temptation except that of flinching from fighting with his fellow-creatures. But I am wasting words on what is so obvious. What Fowler had not was animal courage, he was subject to the passion of timidity, in the same way as other boys are subject to the passions of anger, jealousy, cruelty, or gross appetites; and it ought to have been understood that he was falling before a constitutional weakness, instead of being supposed that he had a formed, settled character of meanness and cowardice. Later in life, when his nature came into play, he found out his weaknesses and fought with them and conquered them. I have seen him in circum-

stances where the boldest of the school prize-fighters might have turned pale, and his pulse has not altered, and his voice been as light and cheerful as ever. . . . Surely a fellow who had it in him to become this, must have shown indications of the real stuff there was at bottom in him. However, we are not at the end, or nearly at the end, of his errors yet.

Well, he was kept two years at home, crawling about by himself as he best could; treated with a uniform cold sternness by his father, and in consequence avoided as questionable company by other people. His family took the cue one from another. Unhappily he had lost his mother when a baby. His brothers thought him a sawney, despised him, and taught his sisters to despise him. Amusement he was not allowed to taste. He was ordered to read, but he had no one to help him; he was not even allowed to look forward to anything ultimately coming of his reading. Some once in six months his father would speak to him of his prospects; but it was only to tell him that he had none —that he could not trust him away from home —that he had thought it his duty to his other children not to mention his name in his will.

Alas, the madness of supposing he could govern his child so! Edward grew up silent, proud, and sullen. His talent, such as it was, had begun to grow again, but now very unlike what it was before. He had learnt nothing at school, at least of what was directly taught there; at home he had no help—no encouragement—no spirit to make him even wish to advance himself. . . . As far as book-learning went, little prodigy as he had been at seven, at seventeen he was further back than he was then. . . . But suffering had made him an acute observer; not a fault in others escaped his eye, and he brooded over their failings and weaknesses, and measured himself against them, and he never rose from a session which he had held in council with himself, without deciding he was the most injured of beings, and pouring fresh and fresh spleen and venom into his wounds. . . . So wretchedly things went on. . . . But Edward was subtle enough not to betray his feelings. . . . The threatened trade hung over him, and anything must be borne to escape from that; and at the end of the two years the Canon had recovered sufficient confidence in him to send him to a private tutor, with a view to his

going to the university. . . . He had continued sullen and unamiable enough, but he had done nothing, and shown no tendency to positive evil, and the venture might be made. This was real kindness; if it had been accompanied with any kind, hearty words, Edward, even then, would have thrown himself in tears at his feet, and his pains and trials would have been at an end for ever. But unhappily the Canon's plan was just the opposite. He felt more confidence than he let Edward see, and the boy was sent away with the feeling that he was watched and distrusted; so that consequently the return he made his father was merely to suspect him too of unworthy motives, and that vanity and unwillingness to have a son of his in a station below his own, was the real moving principle, and no regard for himself.

The venture seemed, notwithstanding, to succeed—in a way it did succeed. For the first time since he could recollect he found himself among people who were truly kind to him, and his frozen heart began to thaw in the warm atmosphere; nay, more, he, the despised, the slighted, the trampled on of everybody, now found himself in a way to be respected. . . .

He was an acute observer and a ready talker, talents always valued and rewarded in life, and he passed at once with a bound into a person whose opinion was to be received, whose advice was often asked, on serious subjects; who, whenever he chose to speak, was sure of listeners.

What a change! and it did him both good and evil. It did him good in teaching him what he was, in warming up his faculties into healthy exercise, and drawing him off from brooding for ever over the phantom of himself. His mind was supplied with objects which strung it again and tuned it. But the harm, perhaps, was greater, for it taught him to contrast the position he held with others with that in which he stood at home. The home government continued to harp unwisely on the old strings, and the discord grew louder and harsher. It was with no very enviable feeling that, in the middle of some serious speculation on which he was dictating—some question of conduct on which he was propounding his advice, that he would find a letter put in his hands from his father or his brother, reminding him of what he had been, and what they partly suspected he was still,

and winding up with threatenings that he was on his last trial, the last time, and so on. The two ideas were so opposite he could not recognize himself in each, so that of course he chose the one which pleased him best, and proceeded equally to resent the other. This was rash in them; it was scattering sparks over powder ready strewed for explosion. The same evil which had so injured him as a child he was fast again becoming exposed to. His talents were outrunning the rest of him. There was no material of character to carry them. . . . What chance had he ever had of forming any? Was there not work *enough* for him, without heaping more fuel on the fire? At eighteen he went to Oxford. Once more among young men of his own age; but how different a part to play among them! The little, weak, diminutive boy had shot up into a tall, well-made young man—the cringing, cowardly wretch, that was driven with blows and curses from the fireside by his brother schoolboys, into the clever, witty, entertaining fellow, with apparently every faculty to entitle him to popularity. He had not much classical knowledge. Poor fellow, that was not his fault; but he had managed to assimilate large stores

of information and anecdote on all kinds of subjects. He had a capital knack of talking; he could row, ride, walk—anything with anybody . . . . He was all things to all men; not because he was well principled or unprincipled, but simply because he was without principle; because he was merely an aggregate of talent, and nothing else. As was to be expected, he shot into popularity. Every body liked him; he was welcome everywhere, from the common-room to the vingt'un party. He seemed just what everybody wished, because it was all "*seem*" with him, he *was* nothing. . . . He was quite as honest, quite as much himself, as far as he had a self, at his tutor's tea-table as at a drunken supper party. Frank and open as he always seemed, every one thought they had him as he really was, and disbelieved the stories they heard about him. Kind and open-hearted he really was; enough facts were known of this to entitle him to be loved. But perhaps he was most his real elf, most like what he had been, in his behaviour to his father. Who can say how strong, how overpowering is the force of association? At twenty, Edward trembled at the sight of him as he had trembled at twelve.

The old system was still followed steadily; the slightest shadow of a complaint, the slightest cloud that rose above his horizon, and his sun was to set below it, and the warehouse or the tanyard was to be his destiny. . . . An imperious command of confidence with none offered: what on earth could come of that? A journal of each day was required to be sent off weekly. What young man's life at college could bear such a confessional, even without the threat of instant removal? . . . Yet it was not without a pang that Edward stooped to his escape, and left out what would be unsatisfactory.

Another mistake was also made which I think was a great one. Home and college changed places. Home was still the place of discipline and authority; all the amusements were at college. At college there were no "you must" or "you must not;" at home there was nothing else. Till he went to college, (at least since he was quite a child,) Edward had never known the idea which is represented by the word amusement. The Canon had made a point of refusing it to him, and taught him to set an unnatural value upon it, in order to make him feel the more poignantly what it was to be deprived

of it. Short-sighted enough. Natural home ought to be real home, the scene of all our happiness, ease, and *absence of restraint.* Young men are sure to have such a place somewhere; if not at home, it will be where it ought not to be. . . . Home, away from home, holidays in term time, and term time in holidays, one set of friends in the order of Providence and another in the order of affection,—what are these but the harshest discords of life, chords that can never vibrate in harmony till art has unstrung the harp of nature, and retuned it without a heart.

For fear, however, I may be squandering my words, and the notion of feelings being of so much importance be thought by some persons rather ridiculous, I will but mention one practical result which at any rate will deserve their attention. To say nothing of the more than questionable character of the greater part of college amusements, they cost ten times as much as ten times the same amount of innocent amusement at home. To think young men will be content to go without amusement, is about as idle as to expect fire to burn without oxygen; and when they find no sympathy, no interest, no

wish to provide them with such things among those who ought to do so, they are less likely to be scrupulous or to care how much pain or injury they may be inflicting on them, by taking their own way of providing for themselves. I can safely appeal to the experience of every one who knows much of college life, to bear me out in saying, that in nine cases out of ten, when young men go wrong there, they will be found to be such as are kept strictly at home; and when one goes very wrong indeed it is invariably so. . . . The mass of them are governed by their feelings. It is no use to complain of it—they are so. You must expect it and provide for it. You may try to govern them reasonably by appeals to their understanding,—you will not succeed. You may try severity, and crush the rock with your hammer, and shiver it with your gunpowder, and it will be rock still; but heat it and drop water on it—warm their hearts with kindness and affection, and let a tear of joy or sorrow now and then fall down on them, and they will soften and be pliant as the clay.

I am not surprised that Fowler was idle and extravagant. He had been weighed down so heavily, and at college the weight was so com-

pletely taken off, that he was like a boat without ballast, and he heaved over at every breath of inclination. No wonder that, with so many temptations, so little natural gift for management, he should have found himself in debt before he was aware of it—no wonder that, with only threats at home to encourage him to be communicative on such a subject, he should have kept it carefully concealed, entangled himself worse and worse in the means necessary to do so, and passed through two of his three years, trusting that some lucky accident would interfere for his deliverance.

CHAPTER IV.

What a load off my mind these last few pages are! I am afraid it will be as dull reading as it has been unpleasant writing. The ink has grown thick while I have been about it. . . . . I have put water with it, and the rest of the beverage, if thinner, will be more palatable. Nevertheless would not one think it high privilege to have to write a thousand such, if one could save a single soul from such a fate as Fowler's?

Such was the fellow, however, that we left pouring himself out to Sterming on the sands at Aberdovey; if it be thought surprising that he should have won the hearts of the Hardinges, it must be remembered that in his dealings with every one except with his own family, he was frank, generous, and unselfish. His affections

naturally very strong, finding themselves forced out of their proper channel, poured themselves out on any one that happened to attract him. His conversation was so bright, his thought and feelings so delicate and beautiful, his temper (he had inherited that from his mother) so sweet and gentle, that as far as a stranger could see him, he appeared the very perfection of a graceful mind. It was the strongest satire as his relation to his own family, that beyond their circle, and the atmosphere of their influence, he fascinated everybody. And by the way, it added no little to his difficulties with himself, the way, I mean, in which other people treated him. It was too easy for him to persuade himself that the external judgment was the true one, the real fair one, and the other the growth of ignorance, and prejudice, and dislike. And the reverse, alas, so far, far nearer to the truth! If they erred in thinking he had no heart, was not his error as deep, and far more unjustifiable in thinking the same of them? Such as he was, however, the Hardinge family thought him almost faultless, and Emma Hardinge quite so. And if Edward ever knew a genuine, hearty, unselfish feeling, it was his love

for her. There is a discovery in modern chemistry that a stream of galvanism passing through a loose heap of powdered metal will convert it to a solid mass. Something very like this was befalling Edward. His loose inconstant nature, which had hitherto refused to retain any form which could be given it, was now receiving a nervous tension and solidity, from the high and noble feeling which was diffusing itself throughout him; a power was found which would bind all the incoherent crystals into a unit again. Providence has many spare cables, with which she holds her sons at their moorings, when wilfulness, or the waves of circumstances have broke them from their own; and true love of man is accepted in heaven, till the true strength of man, true love of God, be grown again. And so it was with Edward Fowler. . . . . Should this cable part too!

In a general way he contrived to make so much of his position clear to Sterming, that the result was the advice which best harmonized with the suggestion of his own heart, to go off at once to Morlands, have it all out with Emma, and put his father's letter into Mr. Hardinge's hands. . . . . Sterming thought it would all

turn on the insanity question. The Canon gave it as a reason, as *the* reason—if it could be removed (and Fowler thought it could) it was not very clear how he could refuse them the little they asked him—to be allowed to look forward at any distance of time to being married; now and then to write letters, and to walk about with no one to look after them in the woods and by the lake side. . . . . And Sterming was right. The scene was all gone through, explanations made, difficulties suggested and answered. The insanity was not hereditary. It was a single instance, and a special reason could be given for it. So a great letter was written to the Canon, detailing all. . . . . The double current from his brother setting the same way, the difficulty being partially removed in one case, opened a breach in the embankment of objections, and the whole swept away; and the elder brother married and got rid of his illness, into which anxiety had thrown him, and Edward was to be engaged. It took time though. It was a fortnight before the Canon's answer came to Edward, after the letter had been sent off from Morlands; he thought it would be better to wait the decision at Aber-

dovey, so he had gone back there immediately. The fortnight seemed a life to him; day tottered after day, as if they had caught the palsy, and were all as much agitated as he was, and could not go about their functions quietly. . . . The letter did come at last, however, and it was a consent. Satirically given enough, but still a consent. It came in the evening. Edward sat up to write an answer, the first really hearty letter he had perhaps ever written to his father. His heart was almost breaking with genuine gratefulness, and whoever could have looked into it then would have seen the noblest resolutions bravely forming themselves, laying broad strong roots, and swelling and stretching in the warmth of so unusual an atmosphere. If the warm wind will only blow till the resolutions have begun to become acts, what may we not hope for Edward?

He did not write all he felt, but he did write a good, upright, sensible, thankful letter. He told his father he knew, and felt, how much annoyance he had caused him; he would do so no more. His character was changed, and he should find it so. This was more than words. The words stood all for genuine thoughts and

feelings. At daybreak he posted off over the hill to Morlands, and the shepherd boys wondered at the buoyant step of the gentleman stranger, and the foot on the fell-side lighter and swifter than their own.

The letter was in his pocket. . . . The letter . . . . . It was rather too caustic, contained too many personal reflections, to be altogether pleasant, but it was a consent, a bright and beautiful consent, a charm which would throw Emma Hardinge into his arms; and such trifles as these, perhaps, did but set off the beauty, like the shadows in a landscape. He was never tired of reading it. No sooner was it in his pocket than it was out again, or his hand went in after it, to be sure it was safe. It is the way to be sure to lose a thing, this perpetual assuring ourselves we have it unlost. . . . Edward lost the letter. . . . Somewhere between Aberdovey and Morlands he had lost it,—it was gone—into the bog, or the river, or the lake, or on the mountain side—somewhere it was gone and not to be found again. He searched and searched, but it was no use—he must go on without it. It was not his fault; but when he came to think about it, it must be owned he did feel it was a

relief. He must have shown the letter, but he was not bound to remember all the bitter things. . . . . It is singular how often the accidents which befall people follow the bend of their character, and chance does for them the sort of things they might be suspected of doing themselves. When real matter of displeasure was afterwards found against Edward, this lost letter was added to it; Mr. Hardinge was led to believe he had purposely made away with it.

At the time, however, no such thing was dreamt of; all was sunshine; all were too happy, to think anything but the best of everybody. Mrs. Hardinge, the little Hardinges, even Mr. Hardinge himself, welcomed him into the family, as now a permitted member of it, with the kiss of good old-fashioned affection, and Emma with perhaps more than one. It was a beautiful meeting—as bad men shed their dark influence on all, good and bad alike, that fall in contact with them, and spread round them a halo of suffering and ill; so do the purely good illumine all who come within their sphere, and mixed characters of earth, when absorbed into the higher systems, shine there with a light not their own, reflecting the rays which fall on them.

Edward lost his faults while he was at Morlands; he remembered them only as an old garment he had outworn, and had now thrown away for ever. Life was still before him. What a life would he not make of it? The concluding two months of the vacation he spent at Morlands; the air and sky seemed to sympathize with the young lovers. The early part of the summer had been wet and miserable; but never did two moons shine through a bluer or serener heaven than that August and September. And were not Emma and he happy then? Happy in each other, living in each other, and requiring nothing else, and thinking of nothing else; for they knew that each was all the other valued, and each had each as fully as they could give themselves to each other. They climbed the mountains, and went long scrambling expeditions across the lake. The woods and waterfalls they could never tire of; they were sure of a kind welcome, and each new time they went again to an old scene it was richer than before, for it was rich in the recollection of the last bright happy visit. Then they would skim down the river in the little skiff, or at evening sit watching the boats from the fell-side, as they

passed up and down, and listen to the splash of the oar, or the distance-sweetened cry of the far-off boatmen, their arms twined round each other, and asking no other pleasure. They did not want to speak, words do but spoil the charm of such moments, when souls seem to know a shorter road into each other, and lips have a dearer use. One evening they went up the Fell to see the sun set. They were half an hour too soon; a thick bank of cloud hung over the sea-horizon; and a veil of mist was wreathed in heavy folds round the head of Cadir. They sat down, hoping for a change. Young lovers never tire of the early history of their affection; . . . and, as if in sympathy with the gloominess of the scene, they were calling up again the clouds that a few weeks since had hung so dark over their horizon. . . . . When just as the lowest rim of the sun's disc touched the sea, the cloud-banks split right asunder; they had held close till the pageant was complete, and now out streamed the sinking monarch, in all his crimson pomp and splendour. Peak after peak put on their glory, and begun to gaze, purple-flushed, on the wonderful vision. . . . . The black wreath on Cadir turned orange-red,

with a fringe of gold, and began slowly to wind about the summit. . . . . As it moved it grew thinner and more transparent, and the giant chair showed glistening through; a single cloud had settled motionless into it, like the outline of a huge human form enthroned there, and the vapour ring split into fairy-like wavy forms, which swept round and round, trailing their pink, gauzy drapery, and weaving round his temples a coronet of gold. . . . . One might have thought the imprisoned Arthur had woke again on the astonished world, and the fairy queens were paying homage to the undying monarch.

"See, Emma," Edward said; "see how beautiful! How like our fate; our clouds how dark they were! . . . . And now the sun of hope has broken upon us, and the very envious vapour itself is turned to glory inexpressible." Alas, had he but carried on the image it had been too true. . . . . It was the *setting* sun that was so beautiful; almost as he spoke it was gone, and all was dull, and dark, and dreary as before. . . . . But they never thought of that. It is no new thing that Nature is for ever but an echo of our own spirit. Time-server and deceiver as she is, she will but read us the lesson she knows we wish to hear.

CHAPTER V.

Time whets his scythe to mow our happiest days. . . . . It is an old story, and we have heaped ill names on him for it, and called him envious. . . Poor Time! the thin abstraction! The fault, if fault it be, is in ourselves. . . . We live the fastest when the mind is most active, most alive. In perfect life and perfect action, not as we know it, but as it is to be, days and years will cease to stand as reckoning marks, and past and future merge in the never-ending moment of eternity.

And these two months must have been very living—very perfect; all but a moment, and they were gone. October came, and the rain began to fall, and the leaves to heap up grave-mounds over the dying flowers, and the sun sunk behind the hill, and took his last leave of the deep

valley of Morelands, till woods and meadows were dressed again to receive him; and Edward too must bid his farewell, and learn as in this world,—alas, they are too often disunited to leave happiness for duty.

And it was for duty. Edward knew now, and felt now what duty was. As the consciousness of time wasted, and worse than wasted, rose accusingly before him, there came with it a strong conviction of what there was in him, and what he might still become; a sense of power nerving and bracing itself, and held steady in one line by the star on which his eye was now unceasingly gazing. He returned to Oxford, outwardly at least so altered a person as to give cause for the most various speculation among his many friends. He had done much wrong; he would do so no more. His expensive companions were quietly dropped. His place was empty at the wine party and the gaming table. There was no affected ostentation of saintliness; no spasmodic effort, self-exhaustive, and self-destructive; but a steady, resolute alteration in all his ways and doings. From being the idlest man in college, he grew to be known as a hard-worker, and tutors began to change their views

of him, and look to making more than something of him. The ground that had been lying so long rotting, was fast covering with luxuriance; and now not Welsh faces only, but higher faces of the university, came with good reason to smile on him approvingly.

Alas! how far easier it is to forsake our faults than to teach them to forsake us! What you sow will grow, and you must reap it; it is a great iron law which cannot be broken. Good resolutions pay no debts. And yet if you cannot pay you must go on and make more. . . . Resolutions not to extend existing debts brought those he had upon him peremptorily. Somehow they must be met, but how? Experience seems to say that the difficulty at Oxford is not to get into debt; that to young men who have had no training in managing, it is next to impossible to avoid it, and the readiest, and really surest way of preventing their extending would be for fathers to assume that at least for the first year it will be so. Encouraging their sons to be communicative, by letting them see they can understand and excuse it, they will put them right once, and experience and thankfulness for a help so timely will keep the boys clear for the future.

. . . . But Canon Fowler had not done this: instant removal was to be the consequence of a single debt, and Edward at an early period of his Oxford career, finding himself entangled, he could hardly tell how, had sunk under the temptation, and his ingrained terror of his father had said it was not so. . . . Poor miserable boy, it was wind indeed he had been sowing. . . . . hollow words that were but air, with no truth in them—and now he must reap the whirlwind. . . . He knew too well what would be the result of a discovery. Perhaps if it had been any one else but his father, or if he had had to begin then with his father, even exactly as he was, he would have gone to him notwithstanding, and risked the consequence. But the association of habitual fear was round him to rivet the temptation. It must be kept from him at all hazards. His ultimate prospects were tolerably good. . . . that is, he could be sure of sometime or other being able to meet such an amount of obligation as he must contract to pay his existing debts. He took a sort of counsel with his conscience, and it did not seem to forbid him to try to borrow of one of his friends what would be enough to set him free. At the end of term he

wrote to one of them, who he knew was able and willing to help him. He was to spend the vacation at home, and the answer to his letter was to be directed to him at Darling. Accident detained him a day later than he had expected. His friend's letter arrived before he had arrived to receive it. . . . Mistake brought it to the Canon, and it was opened.

I cannot follow all the reflections that this sort of chance sends crowding in upon the mind. But nothing can have a more disheartening effect upon a young man, meeting him so in the teeth at the commencement of a return of good intentions; the more genuine the intention the worse the effect. It makes him despair of goodness; distrust Providence, which he assumes must turn on his side the instant he turns himself; and commonly he will give the matter up, and fancy himself the sport and victim of a destiny which will have its way, and it is idle to attempt to stem. . . What is the use of all this pain to be good, if I am to suffer all the same? is unhappily always more or less the thought of all but the very few who have learnt to love goodness for its own sake. . . . The Canon throughout the Christmas vacation was gloomy

and reserved. Except in the common interchange of morning and evening greetings, he never spoke to Edward at all, and even the rest of the family could only conjecture what he intended. What, in fact, he did intend, to this moment I do not know. He reserved the expression of his anger till Edward had returned again to college, and then it began to stream down upon him in letters. Still Edward went on, kept to his resolution, and worked harder and harder, and hoped the Hardinges might not be told. But letter came after letter, each darker than the one before, and at last came one containing an enclosed copy of "what he believed it would be his duty to send to Mr. Hardinge." The increasing darkness of the letters was accounted for by the bills as they came in proving larger (when were bills ever anything else?) than was expected. Edward thought between two and three hundred pounds. They were between three and four hundred. But the question of the immorality of Edward's proceedings did not appear to be affected by that. The real fault, the real important fault, had been the denial two years before. At last, partly from conscience, partly in despair, partly because he

believed if the whole were known at least some excuse might be found for him, and it was better to brave the worst, and trust to time to heal the wound he could not think would be incurable; he copied out his father's letter himself, and with a long one of his own, detailing most of his own history, he sent it off to Mr. Hardinge. . . It was a thunder-train indeed which he had fired . . . First there was a frightful silence; one terror-stricken letter came from poor Emma, saying her father was dreadfully agitated; and the next post the hurricane broke upon him in its brief fury one short stunning letter from himself, and one more of two lines from Emma, to say she could never be his wife.

Whether in this proceeding Mr. Hardinge was acting right or wrong I am not prepared to say. Such a question to be answered would require a long intricate analysis of the formation of character, the nature of the obligations, varieties of knowledge, and varieties of disposition impose on men. That a long, weary course of suffering and misery, and even worse, resulted from what he did, and that all this would have been spared if he had acted differently, is no proof that he did what he *ought* not. It would

only be so on a supposition of a perfect knowledge of all the past facts, and a thorough understanding of character: mistakes often produce greater misery than faults—mistakes that seemingly could not have been guarded against. It is one of the most perplexing parts of the system of this world that it is so. Mr. Hardinge acted on the vague generalizations which go by the name of the moral rule of right and wrong, and the consequence showed that he acted unwisely. But he acted for the best according to his knowledge. His nature was too zealous and too religious to calculate, his passions were all set to his principles . . . . and if the event showed him wrong, it proves nothing but imperfect knowledge, and the inadequacy of the existing average maxims of morality. He had made a multitude of mistakes. He had mistaken Edward from the first; he had assumed from the surface of him that he was almost perfect, and the shock he received when he heard of so grievous a failure produced a total and complete re-action. He had been deceived. . . . But he forgot he had been deceived by himself, and he resented it on Edward. The history he had sent him of himself was all an ingenious

tissue of falsehood; and with the same precipitancy with which he had before assigned him every good quality, he now refused to believe he had any. Yet he did what he thought his duty to his own child. How *could* he trust her happiness in such keeping? How could he leave her exposed to such insidious influence? He forgot that he should have learnt more of Edward before he permited her to entrust herself so completely to him; that where she could so passionately love there must be real good; and that at least now, if he persisted in his present feeling, her happiness *must* be made shipwreck of. . . . What I think his error was, that he absolutely cut off all hope. Not only he did not say Edward's future conduct might influence him: but he distinctly declared, and with the whole passion and energy of his nature, that it never should. To Edward's wild, frenzied letters, he only answered (strange mockery) that he forgave him as a Christian, and would pray for him. He guided the pen in his daughter's hand to write the fatal renunciation of him: and exacted a solemn promise from her that she would never see him again as long as she remained unmarried. Alas! has not God shown

more long-suffering to greater sinners? Have not repentance and amendment earned his best gifts from Him; and if it be said God knows the heart, and can discern the false from the real, has not He too been pleased to waive his superhuman power, and like man, and as an example to men, condescended to use visible amendment as the test of the change?

I am not claiming more for Fowler than his right. . . . I am far from saying that as yet he was entirely changed, and that now he was acting from the best and highest motives. . . . No; but his conduct was changed, and it was changed out of love for Emma Hardinge. If he had been left alone, and let go on as he was going, persisting in right acting, would in time have changed him really and altogether.

CHAPTER VI.

And now my two streams, which had flowed together into one channel, and in their combination seemed to promise so fair and beautiful a course, by this fierce lightning stroke are decomposed again, and each sent off to follow alone its weary, melancholy bed, over rock, and stone, and parched sand, and barren wilderness. If earth be a valley of misery, together they might have filled many at least of its pools with water, and garnished its steeps and sides with flowers and pleasant pasturage; now they must wander alone over blasted and blackened plains, and it may be they will never reach the ocean, but sink for ever in the wilderness of sand.

Edward recovered from a violent sickness only to a more complete conviction of his wretchedness. Of all of pure, and bright, and

lovely, and good, which the memory of his past life held up to him, what was the result? Heart-breaking misery and despair! . . It was all gone. . . . Gone like the pleasant dreams of his childhood, which had mocked his sleep in the college at Westminster—gone, 'like a bright exhalation in the morning,' and had left him never to hope again. Why should he care any more for good? What had good cared for him? What was his life but wretchedness? And if here and there some few cool oases seemed to be scattered over it, no sooner had he plunged into the shade than they sunk away, and the dreary desert was more dreary than before. Suicide more than once held out its tempting promise of release to him. Parhaps he took a worse course than suicide, for he tried to drown himself in dissipation; yet strange enough, evil as it was, there was an embryo goodness in it; it resulted in good of a kind. A brief career of such madness was soon abruptly terminated. This time it was his good genius which guided accident to scourge him from it, and he was sent away for a time from the university in disgrace. He was not to be led out of his errors, he was to be flogged out of them. Some people

take more flogging than others. Edward was obliged to have much. But this last business was nearly the end. . . In a way it was a relief to him; one poison serving as an antidote to another. Disgraced, and his disgrace published, wounded pride came in and drew him off his other sorrows. . . . The smart of self for a time overpowered his more generous pains, and with a violent effort he now nerved himself to survey his position. He could not fall lower.—could he rise? To ask the question is to make a beginning. With a haughty stoicism he resolved to cauterize his wounds or cut them out. If fate, as he called it, chose to go on persecuting him, he would rule fate; and a sternness of purpose, now wholly worldly and irreligious, came to his help, which enabled him to despise opinion and once more rise and exert himself; not to make people think better of him—he did not care what they thought; but because being "in for life," there was nothing else to be done to save himself from being for ever trampled on in the crowd. . . . There was the alternative of suicide: but the course he chose appeared the more manly, and at any rate he could have that always to fall back upon.

Is it strange that this should have succeeded when all else had failed? That a principle of so questionable a character should carry a man right, when what seemed so much better had turned out utterly powerless? Not at all! Anything like a principle, bad or good, so it be a principle which implies consistency, and requiring and compelling consistent action, prevents a man from being blown up and down by impulse, will carry him along on his feet at any rate. . . . To whatever end he comes he is still a man; a match for other men, and more than a match; and sure to rise above all other men, however much purer and better their nature who remain under the dominion of feeling. . . . Directly Edward determined to trust himself and not circumstances, he began to rise. All life, to be worth anything, must be under the control of reason, man's life and boy's life, and even all animal and all organized beings; it is this very conviction that it must be so which makes most education so unreasonable. You see one part of the truth, that your boy must not go wherever any appetite leads him. You appeal to his reason; try to make him govern himself by that, and are angry with him when he fails. You have lost sight of the other half of the

truth, that with boys it is simply impossible. Their knowledge is weak and their feelings are strong; they cannot govern them. The secret of true management is to direct the objects which move their feelings by your own reason. Make them

"Most do your bidding following most their own."

They will be obeying your mind while they do not feel they are obeying. By degrees, as their own mind forms the secret will break on them. By-and-by, when the right time is come, the old skin will cast of itself, and leave no wound in the parting. Boys must follow passion; men, if they are to be more than boys, must never follow it. But Edward had none of this done for him. He had to begin all for himself; it was as if the whole moral knowledge the world has been all its long life in gaining he had to earn for himself in his own person. . . . It is with conduct as it is with science. Certain great generalizations are formed easily, which, whether wholly true or not, are partially so, and will do to begin with. Knowledge far outruns practice. . . . While we stand on one step, we look over many more. So that knowledge is driven to shifts and expedients to help

the lagging body after it. . . . Edward tried the "*vow*" plan. . . . It is a curious feature in our nature, that one can by a single act of will lay oneself under a *rule* which shall act like a little destiny, and save one an infinity of trouble in overcoming particular temptations. Has one never got up in the morning by counting? . . . He made a few simple vows embracing just so much of his conduct as it was his object to control. . . . Of course he did not become all at once all he ought to be. . . . A form which had taken years and years to grow is like to take full as many to metamorphose: but he set himself earnestly to work to find out his defects, and one by one to conquer them. He was a remarkable instance of a character forming entirely *ab extra-crushing*; and a painful trimming business it was with him. Of course there were endless back-slidings; but henceforward his face was always turned one way. In the main it is nothing new that pride, enlightened selfishness, ambition, or philosophy, of whatever kind, do on the whole prescribe much the same conduct as religion and real high principle, and it is lucky for the peace of the world it is so.

He worked away again at his books. After

such violent interruption, and the short, very short, beginning he had made before, he did not expect much to distinguish himself in his examinations; but he did so partially, and in some later trials much more. He felt his *line* was to be a student; and at the time when most men's student life is closing, his was but just at its commencement. He was learning, not for college honours, but to *know;* to make himself a man, and to raise himself above the beings whose plaything he had been so long. It was about then I began to know him. I knew nothing of his history, nothing but one or two facts which were notorious at the university, and flung a shadow over him. But I was struck with a remarkable feature in so young a man, that though he did not appear to be vain, he was singularly unable to take other people's opinions or to be guided in anything by any judgment but his own. . . . Of course it was not possible it should be otherwise. He had grown to be a man with all his work with himself yet to do. He had perpetual tendencies, from long indulgence, to weaknesses of every kind; his whole character was a waste, and he was engaged in reclaiming it, not with moral or religious but

with logical implements. As he became convinced that this or that thing was not as it should be, he set to work to remodel it his own fashion; but it was impossible for any one to understand or assist him, with his whole method so singularly the reverse of theirs.

I am not going to follow him through the next eight or nine years of his life. From time to time a great deal of the old Edward would appear again, as in a newly reclaimed garden we find year after year some unextirpated weeds and wild flowers shoot again, and call for fresh and fresh care in eradicating them. But though he might temporarily seem to be retrograding, his own resolution or some friendly circumstance in the end always brought him off the conqueror. . . . The winds and currents are on the side of the best sailors, and circumstances, as it always does, was setting with him, and never failed to whip or press him straight.

He had not forgot Emma Hardinge. The third year after he had found his orbit and felt himself moving firmly in it, his mind began to set stronger and stronger back to her. His old visions began to form again, and he could not

blame himself, or think it idle in him to hope that time, which devours everything sweet and bitter but itself, had consumed the bitter feelings of the past; that when Mr. Hardinge heard his name with honourable mention in the world, his heart would warm to him again, and that forgiveness more than verbal or religious might reasonably be anticipated. It was, therefore, not without a pang, for the time very poignant, that about three years after he had parted from her he saw the announcement of her marriage in the newspaper. At first, I say, it was most painful. I had come to know him intimately then, and it was the occasion which he took to tell me his history. But it was only at first that it overset him. He had learnt many things in these three years. He had learnt to go without his wishes; he had learnt to know that in a practical as well as in a religious sense it is the severe high school in which alone man can grow to be a man. . . . So that at once he nerved himself to resignation, and found even a pleasure in seeming to learn from it that her sufferings could not have been as great as he had feared, and that he need not any more so bitterly reproach himself as he had

been lately doing for the sorrow he had brought upon her. . . . How idly we speculate on the internal history of another. !

CHAPTER VII.

Hope, it is said, feeds love: and when hope dies, love preys on itself and dies with it; and it is true, if by love is meant a passion which is to find its "earthly close." Any earthly object which we have not, and is before us as something to be obtained, though it may cost us pains and disappointment, we always give up pursuing it when we know its attainment to be impossible. But Emma's love for Edward was only of the present, and knew no future. Pure unworldly natures like hers always live in the present. It was the very thing the Hardinges had been all trained to from children, not to govern themselves by experience from the past and calculation of the future, but to play out like fountains from within upon every moment as it rolls. So that her mind was not set to think things could ever be other than they

were. She had no material to speculate with on changes which were to be brought about by time. She *had* had Edward; not she hoped to have him. And from the moment her father had guided her pen across that miserable sheet of paper, and had drawn the promise from her lips that until she was the property of another man she would never see him more, he was as dead to her. Disappointment was not her feeling; we do not feel disappointment when one dies; a cold, dull, miserable sense that something dreadful had befallen her lay on her breast like lead, and stifled her very breath; the stream of her life, that had flowed on so musically, became choked with snow, and when tears would rise to her relief they hung like ice crystals on her eyelashes. Day and night, summer and winter, were all alike to her. Her sun had set for ever, at least this side of the grave, and would never rise again; the soul had gone out of her; she moved about like an automaton; except when a spectral life would seem to flit for a moment through her as she was dreaming of the past. She clung to the memory of Edward. His unworthiness had not affected her love for him; it was the disease of which he had died. It was not

what he was, for he was not any more: it was what he had been. What lovers see in one another is not the real being, but their own ideal of a perfect being which they attach to one another; and this is why a second real love is always impossible, that such ideal when once fastened round a person can never be called back again; it follows and clings to him for ever, and if he changes it goes down with the memory of what he was to a grave from which there is no resurrection. And so poor Emma moved on month by month and year by year, fearing nothing, expecting nothing, hoping for nothing, except perhaps to die. And her sisters grew up beside her beautiful as she had been, and their lovers came and went, and came again, and there was joy about her, and sorrow, and disappointment, and success; but it all flowed by her, not through her. . . . Her own sad, sweet beauty was as fascinating as her brightness had been, and many a fair youth sighed at her feet . . . but they had not the key-note of her heart, and failed to raise in her an emotion even of dislike. . . . At last her brothers went to college, and one vacation brought back one of their friends with them. . . . Henry Allen was

one of the class of men who have many considerable talents, but none of the very highest. He could do almost everything well—nothing exceedingly well. Clever he was, very, but without what is properly called genius. With a clear eye for things and people, he seldom failed in anything he undertook, for he knew himself and did not attempt what he was unequal to. Witty, amusing, full of clever stories, and always ready to make one when one was wanted on any subject, he was a delightful companion, and never made a visit without being begged to repeat it. . . . One point at least about him commanded very high respect; his mother was poor, and he contrived to relieve her of the expense of his education by taking pupils while he was an under-graduate. . . . He was not the kind of fellow women would fall violently in love with. He was too sensible, perhaps too good—had too much understanding. To be passionately loved, one must be either a person of the highest genius, or a weak and romantic one, like Edward had been, with a talent for dreaminess, which both with the dreamer himself and with others, is so often a successful pretender to it. . . . Allen had none

of all this. He was essentially unromantic. . . . He wrote poetry, and good poetry, but it was all comic. . . . He always was, is, and will be, a thoroughly excellent and very popular man. If he can only rid himself of a theological stiffness which he has assumed no one can tell why, which does not and cannot become him, and damages his usefulness, I know few people who will be able to leave life and point to more genuine good work done than he will. . . . His only serious fault at the time he went to the Hardinges was that he was very poor. What a pity it is that poverty does not extend to the affections, or if they must be, that it cannot keep them under lock and key, with the means of indulging them. Allen, notwithstanding his sense, and notwithstanding his not being, as I said, a person to excite a very strong passion, could yet fall in love himself in his own way; and the mournful sweetness of Emma Hardinge, perhaps, because, at least at that time, she was so unlike himself, made him determine to try if he could not win her. He knew all the story about Edward, and he knew Edward himself, and he soon found he would have an eager listener in Emma if he talked to her of him. It was strange the way

she listened. He talked of Fowler as he had left him a few weeks since, of all he said, and did, and would do. She listened to it all exactly as she would have listened to stories told her of those she had loved in life who had been taken away from the earth; listened as one does when the pain of the first loss is over and one lingers over the sad, solemn melodies of their memory. So entirely had the impossibility of their ever meeting again taken possession of her, that it never even occurred to her, far less took any form of hope; . . . . and she loved to hear Henry speak and to be with Henry, because she found him as it were a revival of Edward. It was not that she did not value him for himself; but it was not in himself that he charmed her; and at last, when he asked her to let him think of her as his future wife, she at once told him he could never be to her what Edward had been. But he knew better than she the almost almighty power of time, and habit, and daily association; he was prepared for the answer; indeed it was involved in the very plan which he had followed. He was too happy to take her promise as she would give it him, on her own terms. . . Love would come after—at least the genuine

esteem and regard which alone deserves to be called love. The more etherial feeling he would dispense with; nay, he did not very much respect. At best he would say it was but the foam on the champagne, and good for nothing but to intoxicate.

And so another suitor came to Mr. Hardinge for his daughter's hand, and a qualified consent was won from him—won not easily, but painfully and reluctantly. He had no personal objection to Henry. He liked him very well, and honoured and respected him, as he thought himself obliged to do. . . . But Edward had been a lesson to him not to be enthusiastic about young men. . . It was no easy thing for him to take a lesson, and when it was forced on him it made a deeper impression than it ought. . . . From Henry's circumstances many years at least must elapse before it would be possible for them to think of marrying; so, though he consented, it was not with a good will, and he was far too single-minded a person to keep concealed any feeling he might entertain. The engagement lasted some few months. It gave no violent pleasure to Emma; she had given up expecting anything of the kind, but though

it could not give her pleasure, it fevered and excited her. She could not help seeing it was a constant wear and tear and anxiety to her father. And falling as these things did upon a mind so harassed and overstrained as the poor girl's had been before, they brought about a partial derangement; at least on no other supposition can I account for the determination she arrived at. But to explain this I must go back again

CHAPTER VIII.

It is not to be supposed that so beautiful, so fascinating a girl as Emma Hardinge, had lived twenty years in the world without having seen many men before Fowler sighing at her feet and endeavouring to persuade her to marry them . . . While they were at their last curacy in Somersetshire, the rector of the parish adjoining them, had professed himself very anxious indeed about it. He was an intimate friend of Mr. Hardinge, and the father did not at the time conceal the pleasure it would give him, to see his daughter the wife of so excellent a man. Mr. Barnard was indeed a most excellent man. He was young, about thirty, with a kind gentle heart, and a clear head, with more than respectable talent, of good family, well off,

and a face you could not look at without feeling irresistibly attracted towards it. Why did Emma find it impossible to think of him as her husband? Why was Emma not the first girl that had found it so? Barnard had tried several, and always with the same result; each lady had felt the warmest interest in him, and the warmest wish to see him happy with any one except herself. . . . The reason was simple. He was only a Christian, not a man; when duty called him all the powers and all the temptations in the world would be but reeds in his path; he would have bathed his hands in the flames at a martyr-stake, and smiled on his executioners; but in these days fortunately the occasions which call out such extraordinary virtues are uncommon, and he wanted opportunity to do justice to himself. . . . In his common duty too in the church or the school-room, or in conversation on serious subjects, Mr. Barnard showed remarkably well: so well, it was almost impossible to recognize in him the shy, hesitating, awkward, irresolute, nervous being that shrunk from you in ordinary life. Ordinary life is for the most part made up of other materials, and in those unhappily he was wanting. His powers could come little into

play in any relation with women. Theology makes bad lovers, and his excellence, although the highest of all, and perhaps the only one really deserving the name, could not advance him a step with them. . . . Added to which there was no earthly passion, not the smallest vestige of such a thing in him. If St. Anthony had been made of his material, he would hardly have been entitled to his saintship; not a breath would have clouded the enchanted mirror of the fairy tale when Barnard gazed into it. . . . Alas! no women, however good, will be contented with a love entirely religious; they could never believe he was what they understood by in love with them, and perhaps he himself was deceived when he thought he was. . . . The consequence was, however, that such love as men feel for men, a friend's love, Barnard commanded from all; and from the best men most of all; the love women bear their husbands, he could win from none. . . . Mr. Hardinge would only tell Emma when Barnard spoke to him, (it was characteristic of Barnard that he spoke to him, not to her) he knew no one he would sooner see her husband, but he loved her far too well to hint or even to feel it would

make him unhappy if she declined. She did decline, and for the time nothing more was thought about the matter.

Well, we left her engaged to Henry Allen. The engagement, as we said, continued only a few months; her own unhappy, unsatisfactory state of mind; the obvious discomfort it gave her father, not once, but many times expressed, a kind of recklessness about the future which she had felt ever since she lost Edward, determined her to give it up. Recklessness is only a working form of superstition: she fancied herself helplessly under the spell of some malicious power which was determined to thwart or blight every prospect however slight a one she proposed to herself of happiness. One black monstrous wave had rolled over the garden of her life; a few frail flowers had begun to show again—again they were destroyed,—what might follow more was almost indifferent to her.

And now in this strangely diseased mind of hers, a purpose began to form itself, which again is of so perplexing a kind that we cannot refuse it our admiration, and yet if once she get it executed, must be fraught with consequences the most disastrous, the most deadly. A sort of

despair of her own goodness, a notion that in all her life she had never done anything to please her father, and that it was all her own fault, took the strangest possession of her. If she had done any good, it was not because it was good, but because it had pleased her herself; she looked back on her history as a dreary waste of selfishness.

> Then when in changeful April fields are white,
> With new-fallen snow, if from the sullen north
> Your walk conduct you hither, ere the sun
> Hath gained his noontide height, this churchyard filled
> With mounds transversely lying side by side
> From east to west, before you will appear,
> An unillumined blank and dreary plain,
> With more than wintry cheerlessness and gloom.
> Saddening the heart.

It was the first time, perhaps, poor Emma had ever reflected on herself. She looked at her life like the poet's churchyard visitor from the north, and a strange business she made of it. . . . Seen on the south side when the sun shone, how different would the scene have shown!

Something she would do; some great good that should be a real sacrifice of self, and give real happiness to her father. Of all that she

could think of that would most delight him the greatest would be, to see her married to Mr. Barnard. She would marry him then. First it looked like a sacrifice: her thinking it was so had been what suggested it to her; but no sooner had she begun to make np her mind to it, than it seemed absolutely right; and she took it as a fresh proof how selfishly unthinking, how bad she must have been that it had never seemed so before. Of course her reason should have guided her, not her inclination; and equally, of course, her reason should be guided by her father's reason, who must know so much better. Her moral eye had lost the faculty of transmitting any set of rays but one. Of course the sky was red, red as fire, and the earth, and the lake, and the mountain, all, all were burning red, and she had gone on dreaming all her life of blue sky and white light, and objects painted with every hue of the rainbow. And so in the unnatural composure which the resolution she had formed on these convictions wrought in her, she went one day to Mr. Hardinge and told him she had been thinking long over the matter, and had seen at last how wrong she had been in refusing Mr. Barnard.

Her sufferings she looked on in a way as a judgment upon her, experience had taught her what were the real qualities to be looked for and valued in life; that nowhere could she hope to find them in such perfection as in him, and that in case his mind remained the same as it had been, she wished to become his wife.

Her words sounded down her father's trumpet like the whisper of an angel. Little, little could he guess the path she had been travelling. He caught her in his arms and kissed her, and called her his own dear Emma, and he did not see that the love which was beaming in her eyes was not for Barnard, but for him. He flew to his wife, and kissed her, then all his children round that he could catch. He could not stay to tell them why—Emma would do all that. Then he rushed to his writing-desk, could not find the key, though it was in his pocket, and broke the lock to get out ink and paper, though there was an inkstand and full portfolio on the table. The letter written, he ran as fast to the stable; he would ride himself to Machynnlith with it, though it was ten miles over the mountain, and a sleety February. He could not stay for his whip, and lost an hour on the road for want of

it; and when at last he came home again it was with his feet uncovered, save by his soaked stockings. He had met a barefoot beggar in the road, and he was far too happy to feel the cold himself.

The post held the letter, the fatal letter. It flew fire-winged, truer than rifle-ball to its mark, through Barnard to Barnard's heart, and he too felt very happy. He had begun to think he was in some way unfitted for women to love, and even Barnard, the pure noble-minded Barnard had found—(oh! how good Barnard must have been, if one is surprised at it,)—he had found it was a mortifying discovery; and now to be so delightfully undeceived; after four years to be remembered and sought for so! What wonder that he wrote and told his friends in higher spirits than were common to him, and that in a few hours he was himself on the way to Morlands.

Oh! if goodness do indeed find favour in the court of heaven, and angels hang about God's servants, to guide them in the mazes of this perplexing world, where, where are those that wait on Barnard and Emma now? The half good, the children of this world, the light and

dark offspring of the sons of God and man's daughters, they may be, left to struggle with what wayward will and untutored nature may involve them in. . . . But these pure ones, what have they done? Barnard's eyes are all unlearned in such studies; he will never read in Emma's face what is passing in Emma's heart, though passion scathe her like a thunderstroke. If Emma's purpose stand the meeting, what hope is there left for them except in heaven—what hope for them to escape the vengeance inexorable nature will have for her violated laws!

But the meeting is past and Emma is firm. Her nature is bound in chains, and the struggle if struggle there is, cannot be seen. . . . Days pass, and the chains hold, but they are tightening now, and Emma's lips are pressed close, and the clear buoyant voice hisses through them when she essays to speak, and cold drops hang upon her forehead. But three weeks to the wedding day! Oh save her, save her now, save her from the mad control of her reason! What have such as she to do with reason? Why, why will she not trust her heart? Can she not see it is conscience which is speaking through it? Alas! if the light within you be darkness, how

great is that darkness! Open your eyes, Barnard. Fool, fool, can you not see the abyss into which you are plunging? Rather, fool to call so on Barnard who has no eyes for sights like these. Another week is gone, another, and the day begins to assume its own form, distinct from its brother days in the same cluster. It is no more next week, but next Thursday. . . . And Barnard walks with her, and talks to her of his poor-house, and his school, and his parish, and theology, and what not, and not one ray of light has broken or will break on him for all the bewildered flashes from those blue wildly rolling eyes. And now the week is come, and Barnard has written to his father, and his sister, and his friends—he has sent orders to his housekeeper to have rooms and fires and tea ready—and the presents are come, and the dresses are made, and the ring is bought, and all Emma's friends except those at home at Morlands, are full of bright anticipations for the future. . . . Except those at home I say, not those who are there. There there is but one heart that is not like to break with fear, and that is the unconscious bridegroom's. He alone failed to see. Her mother and sister, who all knew Barnard, had

had misgivings from the first, and had all along felt an effort in sympathizing with Mr. Hardinge's joy. They suspected, and they watched. Nor could the father's wishes either keep him blind. So day passed after day, and the symptoms grew worse and worse, and more unmistakeable. Her sister spoke at last to her, spoke earnestly,—and more earnestly, but all seemed in vain. She had dug a channel for herself, as she fancied, with her reason, and poured her nature into it. Her misery was only a sign of the badness of her heart which she was determined to conquer, and madness which she took for principle, goaded her along through all. At last the day grew terribly near, and more and more terribly Mr. Hardinge's conviction burned into his heart. Tuesday came, the wedding was to be on Thursday. Some symptoms of uneasiness, which Barnard could not help seeing about him, he could easily explain; of course they must all be sorry at so long a parting as was so soon to be. Emma had not appeared to-day, under plea of headache. It was after tea. Mr. Hardinge was moody and silent; some of the girls were crying; the boys was sitting awkwardly in their chairs, trying under a look of vacancy to hide

what they were feeling. Barnard was busy writing to say how happy he was, and thinking how nice it would be when all was over. Now and then, in spite of himself, his mind would wander off to the last Tract, and he would make some remark upon it to Mr. Hardinge. Alas! when brought into such collision with such deep throbbing human interests, how small, how trifling, the most religious men feel theology! At last, letters written, thoughts thought, questions settled or not settled, nine o'clock, Mr. Barnard's bed-time, came, and he took his candle and departed. As soon as he was gone, Mr. Hardinge rose solemnly, and desiring his wife and second daughter to follow him, he went up to Emma's room. . . . The room was dimly lighted from the fire which was burning low in the grate. She was lying on her bed in her clothes: she might have been asleep, but for the smothered sobs that rose from it.

"Emma, dear child, you never go to rest without your father's blessing. He could not leave you to-night, when it is nearly the last time. . . . Are you ill, dearest Emma? Speak to me, dear. I can see by your lips what you say."

"It is only a headache, papa; it will be all well to-morrow."

"For days past, dear Emma, you have not been looking well. You have not seemed happy, Emma, as I thought you would."

"Would you like to see me happy, papa, with the thought of leaving you and mamma so very, very soon?"

"And yet, Emma, I do not think your mother loved her family less than you; and yet she never looked as you look. You were crying as I came in. If you are really ill, dear Emma, I must have your marriage put off."

A gleam of pleasure shot across her features at the thought of the cup passing from her even for however short a time. But it passed away again in a moment. It must be now or never; she could never nerve herself to it again, and with the passionate conviction with which it worked upon her, she cried with a wild eagerness,

"Oh, no, no papa, not a day! not for worlds!"

Mr. Hardinge shuddered at the deep agony in her face. He looked steadily at her. Her eyes sunk.

"Emma, Emma, what is this?" he said, almost sternly,—"there is something here you have not told me."

"Papa!" she answered, and tried feebly to look surprised; but her voice shook, and forgot the note, and the stiffened features refused to lose their blinded look of suffering.

"Emma," he went on more solemnly, "what it is which is on your mind I do not know. . . . But do not think we have not watched you, these many days past. Emma, I adjure you, by your duty to God, by your duty to me, to tell me whether you love Mr. Barnard? It is a dreadful question for me to ask of child of mine on the eve of her wedding-day. Speak, Emma, I can see what you say."

Emma was silent.

"Emma, you know how I love Barnard; you know how I admire, how I revere him. What happiness it has been to me to think of you as his wife. . . . But Emma, here I tell you, and I call God to witness what I am saying, if child of mine is to give her hand to any man because she honours and admires him, or for any other reason, when she cannot give him her heart, may He of his mercy take me away from off

the earth, before I witness so dreadful a violation of his laws."

Emma looked up bewildered. What! this heroic self-sacrifice then to which she had so desperately nerved herself; this, which was to be the one good act to atone for a life of selfishness; this, this called a violation of the laws of God, called so by that very father for whom she was to make it? What did it mean? What was it all?

"Think, Emma, think of the high and holy nature of love. Think what love is; for what God's gracious providence in His wisdom ordained it, and remember the oath you will have to swear. Emma, will you dare to trifle with God? Will you stand before his altar with a lie upon your lips?"

A lie! It went like a lightning stroke through the poor girl's brain. She had never thought of that—still she could not speak.

"Emma, Emma! by your love of the most High God; by your love for me, for your mother—on my knees, I pray you speak; speak to her if you will not to me."

Emma raised her eyes. Half blinded as they were with tears, she could still see that

most fearful sight, a father on his knee before his child. Great tears were streaming down the old man's cheeks. She threw herself into his arms, and lay there sobbing as if her poor heart would break. Her mother raised her gently, and laid her again upon the bed; and at last, when she recovered herself enough to speak, she threw off the burden from her weary-laden heart, and told them all. What followed then is too pure and holy for me to travel over; the pen cannot whisper, nor hush its voice to speak with reverence such words and thoughts as that small chamber witnessed then. Let me draw back and close my ears to what I have no share in. Let the veil hang before the Holy of Holies. God would be alone with the pure when they are offering their hearts to Him.

CHAPTER VIII.

The morning came clear, bright, and frosty. The water-birds were skimming up and down the lake to warm themselves. The sun shone into the breakfast-room through mimic shrubs, and trees, and flowers; the ice crystals splitting the rays in pieces, and glittering with a thousand hues. You might think each window-pane was a camera, and you were looking into the real garden. It was such a morning as Barnard had foreseen when the clear calm moon had shone in upon him the night before, the few moments he lay awake after his candle was extinguished. Barnard could read the heavens and discern the signs of them; he had no skill to read the signs of the workings of the human heart, and the moral morning was not as he had foreseen it. He studied man with his

theology, and could see nothing except what it could shine upon. And alas, in these days of ours, if theology be at all a science of things Divine, it is not as they walk on earth, but far away as they exist in the pure ether of abstraction. Briskly he drest himself; briskly he ran down stairs; and when he found the breakfast-parlour empty, ran out upon the crisp gravel and crunching grass; and he rubbed his hands, and composed a brisk reproof for Emma, when she should appear, upon her laziness, and as near an approach to a joke as his nature would permit him, in a sly allusion to the morrow. And he walked up and down till the soles of his feet, and his fingers' ends, and the tips of his ears tingled in the frost; and each time as he passed he looked in at the breakfast-room window, and it was empty still. Strange the prayer-bell did not ring. The breakfast things came in; the urn came in and hissed and sputtered away to be taken notice of, and at last cooled down into sulky disgust that he should have been put into such a state of excitement and no tea come of it; and on went Barnard up and down, and rubbed his hands, and wiped his eyes, and wondered pleasantly,

and thought of the many pleasant things he would say; and behind the window-blinds more than one pair of child's eyes were peeping at him, and shame to say, they were laughing. At last, in a voice half sunk, half trembling from fear it should be wrong, he called up to Emma's window; and, poor fellow, he may call and call on, but unless his voice can reach to Aberystwith, she has poor chance of hearing. If his sleep had not been so very sound, the noise of wheels leaving the house very early that morning might have let some light in upon him before the sun rose. There was no Emma for him. But there was a letter from Emma, and it was lying then on the breakfast-room table, and he has not seen it; they know he has not seen it by his air, and his voice, and the tone he is calling in, and they cannot make up their mind to go down to him till the unpleasant news is broken and in part realized. The elder ones in the family are very serious; the younger ones have a rather vivid feeling of the ridiculous. But it is characteristic of them, that not one in the whole family had an idea that he had been used ill, or even that he could possibly think he had. If there had been the

slightest notion that it was possible, Mr. and Mrs. Hardinge would of course have communicated what had passed to him themselves; but it was out of pure tenderness of him that they chose the other way. Deep and sincere pity is what they are feeling for him, and that is all. Anything wrong in what has been done now there cannot be. Have not all their proceedings obeyed natural impulse? even Emma's, was not that an effort of misguided heroism, which, now that it has been so happily interrupted, it is impossible not in a way to admire. Even that he has made a great mistake, does not come before Mr. Hardinge in that form. He does not look at it all as something which he has brought about and might have prevented, but as an event in Providence; and he regards Barnard, and feels for and sympathises with him as with a person suffering some heavy undeserved affliction.

Each hour as it passes steeps us in its incidents, and rolls away and leaves us to the next; and the moment in which the Fates held the disclosure snspended, brought it in due time to Barnard: bear it in such sort as he may, he had no resource but to bear it. He

must go away from Morlands, return to his place as he came out; and those who know him will feel the high respect and love they bear him will not allow them to smile at so untoward an issue of his hopes. They will sympathise with him as really as, and with, perhaps more real right than, the Hardinges; and, till they *know* all, and till the entire Hardinges are brought before them, they will feel an indignation for him which he does not feel himself. He retires; his trial is over; he has been tempted out from his quiet haven upon a sea where vessels of his build commonly find a worse fate than his. Let him go home then once more, and thank God upon his knees, that foul weather was sent not too late for him to escape; that the treacherous sun had not shone on and tempted him to his destruction. If Emma had married him, within a year Emma would have been insane. The Hardinges do not escape so. Most vessels founder the day after the storm, when the waves are still rolling, and there is no wind to steady the ship under their blows. So long as the marriage had been before her a real prospect, self-imposed by her own voluntary choice, her mind was held fixed

upon it at however fearful a strain; it was fascinated as people are by breakers at sea under their bow, or the intention of suicide. It was not madness; but an awfully reasonable composure, reasonably, firmly, and resolutely following as a decision of madness. And now, with one sudden sweep, all this was gone. One has heard of men going apparently quite calmly to the scaffold, who being met there by an unexpected reprieve, have gone raving mad.

Emma did not become mad, but she became something so like it, that with the tendency in her family to which I have alluded, the most painful alarm was felt. She was in the house of one of their friends at Aberystwith. The day after she got there, an express had to be sent off for her mother; and in one day more it was thought necessary to write to the family physician, who was then at Edinburgh, desiring him to come to them post-haste. On his arrival, which was as rapid as possible, he was put in possession of all the facts of her case, as far as any but herself were acquainted with them; and supposing, as he did, from what they all believed and told him, that the secret of her suffering was the secret affection she was che-

rishing for Henry Allen, he told her father he believed the only thing to save her mind was to get her married to him as quickly as possible. Mr. Hardinge, always precipitate, wrote immediately off to him,

> An exact command,
> That on the supervision, no leisure bated,
> No not to stay the—

"packing of his portmanteau," he should come off and be married to his daughter.

Poor Henry! it was a strange order to come upon him by the very post which he expected was to bring him the news that she was lost to him for ever. . . . He, like a sensible man, had subdued his mortification, and was busy impregnating himself with Aristotle for his degree examination, then about a month distant; and it is not to be denied, that he thought the proceeding unphilosophical exceedingly. He pleaded hard for that but one month, and sheltered himself under want of money even for the common purposes of travelling; but the mind to which he addressed his entreaties was deafer than the ear. Answer came—never did post bring a swifter—that it was to be then or never. Five pounds were in the envelope, and

the next coach which left Oxford for Birmingham was to bear him on its roof. Mr. Hardinge was inexorable, and so it came to pass that within a fortnight of the morning on which Barnard received his dismissal, (one is almost out of breath as one writes it,) the advertisement, announcing the marriage was in the paper. Barnard read it, and condescended to a common-place, on the no faith to be placed in women. Fowler read it, and knowing nothing of all this story, and feeling what I told you above he felt, he took the occasion to tell me his history.

Was Emma happy? Perhaps. It seemed her fate, and she surrendered herself to it, if not readily yet without reluctance.

CHAPTER IX.

In the beginning of February 1846, (the last page ends in 1840,) I found a letter on my table one morning in Fowler's handwriting, with the post-mark of Torquay. My mind misgave me when I saw from where it came. Life was indeed changed with him since we left him. He was alone in the world—one by one his family had gone down before that luxurious feeder on youth and beauty, consumption. His father had been dead about a year: Edward himself had shown symptoms enough of delicacy to make us all uneasy, but he was sanguine himself, and we had begun to hope he might get over it. I tore the letter hastily open, and found my worst fears confirmed.

"My dear Arthur,—You know how I was crowing about myself when my cough went last spring; I thought I had cleared the point at last where my brothers and sisters had gone down, and was well out at sea for a life voyage; and now I have got to sing my last Paliodia as my last chance to propitiate the deities I have affronted by my confidence. Unless the wind changes, and that speedily, before this spring is out, my vessel will be stranded, and the soul of it will be with the elements. I was going on very well till the autumn, and so much was clearing up about me, and my mental horizon at any rate losing so many of its clouds, when all at once, no leave asked or notice given, down came this vile cough upon me again; the wind is blowing dead upon the rocks, and I feel myself daily and hourly drifting perceptibly to leeward. I tried to work out at Ventnor, but it was no use, and I ran off here—but I am doing no better. I have tried my vessel on all tacks and at all points, in doors and out of doors—cold water and hot, cod's liver and homœopathy, riding and walking, but each time I take my bearings, there is no mistake about it, I am nearer and nearer in . . . And so now I have pretty well made up

my mind to the worst, and can look calmly at it. How thankful I must be it has pleased God to bring me down with a disorder which promises to leave me my mind to the last unimpaired, so that I can meet what is to come with composure. It is not that I think much of dying. I am in God's presence now; I cannot be nearer to or further from Him; and what else is there for a serious person to hope for or to fear? I have not found the taste of life this side of the grave so very sweet that I should be unwilling to exchange it even for the charms of what I may find beyond. But what is really distressing, is to feel I have to go with no work done to follow me, without one single point to look back upon, in which I have made the earth better or happier by my presence on it, and so much, alas! that I have done so different! It had been my hope in such time as this, to have been able to say, my '*Vivi*,' to have tried the sword I have tempered myself, in one battle at least, for truth against dreams, and then I could go, O how gladly! But I shall have nothing to hand in, except intentions,—what they say the road to the wrong place is paved with. Plans and designs, not one of which has begun to

grow even upon paper. Are such accepted? And I have had all my work to do with myself so late, the work of a life patched up in a few years; built downwards too, the foundation last and hardly finished! What a weary, weary business these last few years have been to me! and now that the work seemed done, that I had begun to feel I might go out and labour to help my fellow-creatures, as I laboured with myself—the time is up, the accounts have come, and I am called to send in the books. . . . . How far I have done will for myself remain to be seen then. As I understand it, the question will be rather. What are you? What have you made of yourself?—then one by one what are the specific things you have done? By a subtle enough, but exact enough power, each thing you do leaves its indelible scar upon you, and remain recorded, like two stones in a piece of masonry, not separate but in a collective result. But the great question of right and wrong seems far too complicated to let me think each act can have a specific value, with an equivalent of pain or pleasure weighed over against it in a scale. I cannot believe we are any more answerable for the mistakes of our early life than a young

student of painting for his bungling first attempts. The analogy, I think, holds good further than people will commonly allow it. They have all gone wrong some time, but they think to make up for it by the strictness of their creed; and the least charitable people are always those whose life gives them the least right to condemn. We are started only with faculties and materials; we have to become acquainted with the nature of both, and equally require time and practice to get skill in their use. Certainly what we know of man in fact, proves, as far as induction can prove anything, that the experimental skill of another, is as little tranferable in morals as in art. You may say this or that thing is to be done, and the other is to be let alone, and what can be easier? Just as the artist will make such and such strokes which will be easy enough to him, and till you try, seem so to you; but which, when you do try, you do not find you can imitate. Both artist and moralist will wonder at your perseverance, and one will call you stupid, and the other vicious, when there is neither stupidity nor vice in the case, and you are only going over the same ground as they themselves

once went over and have forgotten. Of course, teaching does much, and bringing up more. Perhaps when the science of the thing is thoroughly understood, they may do everything; but at present there are many mistakes which science has failed to understand, and one is obliged to make them to know they are mistaken; one must fall to know what it is to stand; and one is unwilling to believe this must be so always. Why, for instance, is it so hard to get men to believe they must often cross their inclinations, when the inclination is innocent? We find it so written in books; tutors teach it or dwell upon it, lecture upon it in their way, and off we go from their presence, and make haste to find a gratification for every evil; and we go on so, till experience scourges us into conviction. I am not speaking of such of our teachers as tell us one thing, and set us the example of another—take God's covenant in their mouths, and never take the trouble to reform themselves, but almost of the best we have. One great reason, I think, why they so little affect us, is the pedantic rigidity with which they bring their doctrines before us. We believe nothing of what they tell us, because we

know half of it to be false. . . . Say they have gone wrong and been led right; they shrink from dwelling upon their aberrations in a way that would enable them to analyze them, but throw all that away as not only wrong, but absolutely and entirely sinful and depraved. They call it bad names, corrupt, unregenerate, state of servitude to evil spirits, and what not; and when they see us going wrong, they speak to us in the same strain—whereas, in fact, it certainly is not so. Let them say what they will, human nature never can take pleasure in evil. Its worst alternatives are bewildered seekings after what is considered good. Nothing is liked or can be liked for being evil. The worst men account for themselves to themselves in their own way, varnish their doings with their idea of good; and some element of real good there is sure to be in every man's notion of good. You may as well tell me I would drink poison knowing it to be so, as that I would do one act which I knew to be not only generally, but in that particular case bad.

"I beg your pardon for troubling you with these speculations of mine, but it is a solemn time this for me, and I am chiefly busy in sum-

ming up and scrutinizing my own past. . . . It is a melancholy business with a retrospect so dreary. To have been obliged so many times to be taught and taught the same thing over and over; each time forgetting the meaning of the word, and having to look it out again in the dictionary of suffering. . . . . One seems to wonder at the little use other men's experience is to us, when one thinks how very often one's own has to be repeated. Pray forgive me—my pen runs off with me. Do not think I am looking for excuses for what I find in myself so unsatisfactory. I have had teaching enough and practice enough if ever any man had, and it is shame enough to me to be only what I am. I am not letting metaphysics run away with me, and prevent me from calling good good, and bad as bad can be. Only I wish to discriminate. I fancy there is as much, perhaps more harm in this wholesale way of blaming them than there is in none at all . . . it is a very untrue, and it pretends to be so true.

"I assure you I want all my philosophy in this place to keep me up; I am, I believe you know, the last of my name; I have no brother, no sister, not a friend, (at least with me,) to

look after me, and talk to me, and keep my spirits up with telling me how much better I look. One by one I saw them lowered down into the grave, where, unless I am far wrong, I shall very soon follow; and my soul will be with theirs . . . . Alas! will it? Philosophy says it is so unlikely we shall ever meet where we shall know each other as we have been; and yet it may be weakness, but I must let my heart mould my creed for me. The parting cup would be bitterly mixed if I could not hope I should again see my father, where there can be no misunderstanding more, and hear him tell me he has forgiven me for all I made him suffer.

"The doctor has just been here; he has looked me over, felt my lungs, and persists in telling me I shall get well again. I do not mean to let myself believe him; I measure myself by other people; I march about in this city of consumption. . . . One sees them at first pretty strong about everywhere, and at all times; then they subside to the middle of the day walk and the respirator. . . . From that to the carriage is a short step, and a shorter then to the easier chair. Then we meet their wives

and daughters about alone, and in a few weeks there is a notice to let in the house-windows, or black gowns and bonnets in the place of the blue ones. . . . 'So runs the round of life'—rather of death—here at Torquay. I am at the respirator stage, where I am sticking longer than most of them do, and this makes Doctor ——— sanguine about me. But there is no mistaking the face that stares at me out of the looking-glass. There they are every feature the same as it was in those I watched down. . . . I wish you could contrive to come down to me. It is selfish to ask I know, but when one is ill, one is entitled to be selfish. It is really lonely for me, almost dismal at times. I am not allowed to work—even this letter has fatigued me. Perhaps when Easter vacation comes, you will . . . . . if . . . . if . . . . I still want you.

"Your affectionate,

"Ed. Fowler."

What a letter! with such a story to tell, and so calm and quiet with it all. Something too, as it seemed to me, so thoroughly unsatisfactory in its tone and feeling. Such speculations, at such a time! What one should write to him one

could not tell in the least. I would have gone down at once had it been possible, but for six weeks there was not a chance of my getting away, and in the mean time what might not happen! I knew Fowler too well to doubt the painful reality of all he said; if it was not real it was too shocking. . . . No; he felt what he said; he would go quietly on to his end, and except what disease might do, his pulse would never alter. I wrote what I could, commonplace enough, as consolation always is. His views I could only half understand, and not at all sympathise in. For three weeks I heard nothing more from him! After such a letter as the first, what might one not fear? For the down-hill of consumption is the side of a sphere. At first the decline is scarcely perceptible, but it becomes fast steeper and then steeper, and at last it is the side of a precipice. . . . . But at the end of the month came another letter.

"Feb. 27.

"Since I last wrote to you, one of those curious things has befallen me which baffle all conjecture to account for them, and tie up the broken threads of our life when we had lost the

clue; one of those things which befall most people once in a life, and seems sent on purpose to silence incredulity, forcing us to believe there are other powers at work upon this web of life than are seen at the loom.

"It has shaken me very much, perhaps made my time shorter,—at any rate it has settled the question for me if there was any doubt remaining that I am to go. In my own private history it has served to furnish all that was wanting, and now it is completed.

"I was walking one fine morning up and down the end of the quay; there was no wind, the warm sun was pouring down a heat which almost makes February into July here. My cough had been growing easier, and now and then a thought had been stealing into me, that the doctor might be right, and there was a chance for me after all. . . . The boats were passing in and out, a large vessel was lying outside which had been waiting for the tide, and now at high water was to be towed in. You know there is a double pier at Torquay, and a pair of hawsers had been run out from the vessel's bows to each; she was to be brought up the opposite side of the harbour to where I was, so

that all the people were collected there, and I, with a nurse-maid and little boy, who was watching the proceedings with the intensest interest, were the only occupants of mine. The line from the vessel to my pier was run round a capstan at the point of it, so that it could be slipped from on board the ship when it was of no further service. . . You know how I love the sea and all to do with it. It is almost the only thing I feel a passion for. I was leaning against the parapet, half-watching, half-dreaming of the many bright beautiful voyages I had had, and the many more I had once hoped to have, when I was startled by a scream from the nurse, and on running forward, I saw the little boy in the water. He had ventured too near the edge in trying to get as close to the ship as possible, when the hawser was suddenly slipped, and the bight of the rope as it ran round, had caught his leg and he was thrown over. There were boats enough about, and sailors would have been in the spot almost instantly, but, like a fool as I was, nothing would satisfy me but I must forget all about my cough, and jump in after him. It was near enough to the steps. The water, when I was well, was as much my home

as the firm ground; so we were soon out again, neither of us at the time feeling any harm from it, except the drenching. I was not very anxious to form any acquaintance at Torquay, still less under circumstances which might be exciting. Whoever the child's friends were, they could not know how little they really owed to me, and would most likely bother me with their gratitude.

"You know how I always hated scenes, so I splashed off home with all speed, without telling the nurse, who, poor thing, was almost out of her wits for fear, who I was. I went directly to bed, as the best thing I thought I could do. The next day I could not leave that . . . nor the day after could be more than removed out to my sofa. . . . If any one called, I had given orders, of course, to be invisible, as I had misgivings that I might be found out. I was just beginning to recover strength to think what a goose I had been, when a card was brought up to me, with a name and a few words in pencil. . . . The name was the Rev. Henry Allen; . . the words were, 'For God's sake let me see you.' . . Yes; it was Allen, and the boy was their child—their only child. . . I

can hardly tell you what I felt; irritation I believe principally . . . Why must they track me down to my grave, and make the end as bitter as they had made the middle? . . . I had sent down to name another hour when he might come, and then I set to work to think what it might all mean. . . . It was they certainly. Allen had been obliged, unexpectedly, to vacate his curacy in the north of England, and being unemployed, he had availed himself of an offer of a chapel at Torquay. He had been here but a few days when the accident happened. . . I got over my annoyance as well as I could. . . My worser nature tempted me to complain, to wish with all my heart it had not happened. . . But I cannot think it is a mere coincidence, so I try to endure and wait the issue in faith. . . . Allen came at the time I said; I had met *him* more than once since his marriage, which softened off the angels of the scene. But it was very, very awkward. A more awkward hour I never passed. He took my hand as he came in, with a few real, frank, manly words; but I was too weak to do more than tell him how little he owed to me, and intreat him not to think what I had done had in any way altered

my chances for the future. The superstitious feelings I had about it he was not a person to understand, so I let them alone. But what I did tell him was quite true. . . . My case was desperate before, and it would be far more likely to shorten my few weeks, or whatever might be before me, I said, to know that they were distressing and disturbing themselves so needlessly. . . . But there we paused. Each of us wished to speak of Emma, and neither of us seemed able to be the first. When we had met before, of course we had never mentioned her. At last Allen got out that she wished to see me. . . . I felt it must be, yet I shrunk from it. Long, long ago every trace of my old feeling for her disappeared. . . . There was that strange story some one told me about Barnard, and the way she had behaved to him. How much to believe of such things one does not know, but there was something rather strange about it certainly. And then her having been, as they say, so passionately attached to Allen, and so soon having been able to forget me; one felt so disappointed in her, that one could not go on even regretting very long that one had lost her. As far as my own feelings go, I

could meet her calmly enough. But she is painfully excitable; and if there are to be any spasms and outbreakings, I am selfish enough to wish her well at the other end of Yorkshire again. . . . However, I see it is laid upon me; it is no use to resist, and I bow my head to the breath of destiny. She is coming to-morrow. Nine years ago. I wonder if she is changed. Some one told me I should not know her again."

"March 10.

"I have seen her again. . . . Nine years;—it is strange, very strange! Yes, I have seen her again; again I have held her in my arms; once more I have felt her warm breath upon my cheek, and her lips upon mine. I had lived for this. This was the secret of this strange meeting, and now I suppose I may die. She came: Allen brought her. I was startled to see how like she was to what she had been. I saw no change, except in the sweet sad expression in that once so bright and sunny face. And even it seemed to link on closer to the moment when we parted. She had looked just so then. I had felt the meeting, the first meet-

ing at least, would be so painful to me, that I nerved myself for an effort, and, as well as my strength would let me, I talked away of a thousand quite indifferent things, to give her time to recover herself. . . . But it would not do. It is ill talking of such matters to a heart that is full to bursting. Emma's eyes were swimming in tears. Allen, noble-minded fellow as he is, felt his presence a restraint upon her; since he knew what then I had never guessed at; he knew what she had felt so long, what she still felt for me, and which this unlucky accident had now made break out again in a form almost agonizing, and he rose and left us. . . . Coward as I am, I would gladly enough even then have escaped from what was to follow, and I half wished she had gone too. But it was to be. She at least would be miserable if she could not speak; and I, too, how could I tell whether there was not something I was bound to hear? or if not, why should I care for myself? What right had I? So Allen went, and then down went the floodbank, and out rushed the full torrent of her soul. Out it came—such a history, and for me to hear! She told me of that bitter farewell letter. She

had never written it, her father's hand had governed hers; and then a fatal promise he had wrung from her, that though she loved me still, and never could cease to love me, she would never see me more till she was the wife of another. . . . This to me! God forgive me the unworthy thought that my unworthy soul gave birth to. Could the hope of meeting me again, then, have found some corner of your heart to hide in when you married? But the clear blue eyes met me so steadily, and yet with such bitter melancholy, that mine sunk abashed. . . . There was not a thought in her mind her husband might not have shared in; perhaps not one he had not. I never knew till that moment how much a purely virtuous person could dare. And then I had to hear about Allen how he had long wooed and sought her; how she had warned him what she felt, what she always must feel for me, though she knew that I was lost to her for ever. . . . Then all her struggles, her father's anxiety and displeasure, the true story of the Barnard business, (the brave heart in her! It is a true piece of heroism; I will tell it you when you come to me,) which foolish people have made such mockery of, and

treated as a comedy. . . . Then how she came to be married at last; and Allen how good, and kind, and generous he was: but for years, she said, it had been her one great wish to see me again, and tell me all. . . . And now to meet me so; I had saved her child, Allen's child, and I must die. . . . O no, no, not die! and she threw herself on her knees beside the sofa, and flung her arms around me, and laid her face upon mine: and tears were hanging on my eyelashes, which had not flowed from me. All this passed so rapidly, it was so strange, so utterly unlike what I had looked for, that I knew not what to think. . . . Again I looked wonderingly at her for a trace of such feeling as in any other woman on earth, at such a moment, would have been the all-absorbing one. But there was none. If ever spotless conscience lay in human soul, it was behind those features, and again I had to feel ashamed of my suspicions. To the pure, all things are indeed pure. My heart, if I ever had one, turned long ago to Greenland ice; but if it had not been so, and a sentence had passed my lips which betrayed an unlawful thought, even an unlawful regret, she would have turned away, and left

me for ever, and perhaps broken her heart in grief for me. But to blood like mine there was no danger; if my pulses beat as strong, and life was as full and bounding in me as when last I saw you, I could have passed through the same scene as calmly as I have now. But she perplexes me strangely. I cannot but wonder at and admire her. . . . If it is right or not, I cannot tell. As a phenomenon, she seems to come under no class which moralists have pronounced their opinion upon. I hope I do not sin against her, when at times I think it fortunate I am going to die. The real difficulty with me about her is, however, that she ever married Allen at all. She will be happier with him when it is all over with me, now that she has seen me, and in a way delivered her diseased memory of me. . . . But I cannot say I see why she did not wait, and hope and hope. What can love do, if it cannot make one hope when there is no reasonable ground for hope, or, if you like, none at all? . . . I am afraid, from what she said, her mind was unsettled. But perhaps it is better as it is. At any rate it soon will be so. I hardly know what to say about myself, how soon it may be.

It may be weeks, it may be months. I may weather out another summer still. The Allens are with me every day. Emma almost lives here, and my little Jemmy has installed me into the dignity of an uncle. . . . Children don't seem to be equal to the idea of a friend who is not a relation. Allen comes himself when he can, but he is busy. . . . You will soon be free. . . . And you will come to see me, will you not?"

The first day I was free, I hurried down from Oxford. It was the beginning of April, bright clear, cloudless weather; the hedges smothered in primroses and blue violet, the fields yellow with daffodils. There had been a draught of wind from the east all March; but it blew so lightly, that except at night one could almost fancy it was summer. It was evening when the coach set me down at the inn at Torquay, about an hour before sunset; one of those yellow evenings we never see except in Devonshire in spring. Fowler was living in one of the large new houses in the Rock walk. He had chosen the place himself, in spite of its being so ex-

posed, for the sky and the sea had been his earliest friends, and they were all now that he loved with an enthusiasm. I was expected. The servant opened the door before I had had time to knock; he had seen me coming, and took my bag without more question than to pronounce my name. He just told me, as we went up stairs, I should find his master worse. Poor fellow, he had hardly strength to say so. For Edward was so kind and thoughtful of every one about him, that though he loved none of them, they all adored him. He opened the drawing-room door. It was a long double room, divided with folding-doors, one of which was half-open, and I could see, without being seen, into the further end of it. There was a deep oriel window projecting outwards over the sea, deep enough for a person lying in it, with his back towards the room, to command the entire bay through the centre and side windows; and there lay, on a slanting spring couch, my old friend,—I could not doubt it was him,—drinking in the beautiful evening, and lingering out the last lagging moments of his life over that happy sea where he had known so many happy, happy hours. . . . A lady was sitting by him, with a

work-table, and various books and papers lying scattered about. It seemed she had been reading aloud to him. There was a sweeter voice than his in the room as I entered, and I saw her turn a book down upon its face as the servant opened the door. I thought it was my coming in which had disturbed her, . . . but it was not; a side door I could not see had opened at the same moment in the room where they were, and a little boy came in, holding the corner of his apron in both hands. I motioned to the servant not to move, and stood for a few moments watching.

"There, uncle Ned; see here what I have got!" and he showered out his little treasure of cowslips and white violets into his lap, and lifted himself up on tip-toe and kissed him. He seemed ashamed of what he had done, and half really, half pretending to be afraid, he turned down and hid his face in his mother's lap.

"You told me uncle was going away, mammy, so I thought I'd go and see if I couldn't get something pretty for him to make him stay with us. You won't go now, will you?" and he ven-

tured up again, and parted Edward's damp hair from off his pale forehead, and stroked his cheeks with his little pink fingers.

"Not directly, dear Jemmy, I hope; not quite directly: but I believe I must go sometime, soon, . . . I should like very well to stay with you, Jemmy; but we can't always do as we like, you know."

"Not you, uncle? Can't you? so old and so big as you are? But, uncle, papa goes away sometimes, and comes back again to us after a little bit; and then he goes again, and he always comes back. And you will, uncle, won't you? You'll come back and stay with us, and never go away any more. Where are you going, uncle?"

"Where will these pretty violets here go next week, Jemmy?"

The child looked up puzzled.

"Will the violets come back from where they are going, uncle?"

"Yes, next spring, Jemmy."

"But these violets, uncle? These very same ones? Shall I go out again with Nanan and find them again just where they were,

these same ones, and bring them in to you, uncle? Uncle, will you come again next spring?"

"Yes, my next spring, Jemmy."

And Edward's voice passed lightly over the second word, and the child's face grew bright again.

I beckoned to the servant to go in and say I was come; I waited a moment more, for the lady, I saw, made a movement as if to go. "O stay, Emma dear; don't go; stay and see Arthur. He is no stranger to you. What I know he knows. He knows all." . . . But this only seemed to quicken her movements, as she and Jemmy were out of sight in a moment.

I could barely catch a glimpse of her face. But the glimpse was quite enough to tell me how far short even the passionate description I had heard of her fell of her singular beauty. Edward half rose as I came forward. "This is indeed kind of you," he said. "These sick rooms, they are a dreary piece of business at the best. At least to others."

Nothing you may have been told can really prepare you for the changes you are to find in

a person you left in full health. The strongest imagination is too weak to unfix the last image your senses gave you; and do what you will, it is with that you will make your comparison. Edward had talked of a chance of another summer; another summer! no, he would never see another May! I looked at him, I suppose, with so very woebegone an expression, that he began to laugh. "Don't make such dreadful faces at me," he said. "You look almost as hideous as my own image of myself in my looking-glass. Why, Arthur, you know no more of me now than I told you. . . . I thought you were above mere nervousness. Come, come, it's bad enough to have to die, without one's friends making it worse for one, instead of better. You must get yourself together, or I shall be packing you off again. That pretty boy's violets! Will you put them, please, into the water there? Jemmy Allen brought them to me just before you came in."

"I saw him."

"And you heard him, poor little fellow! I hope I am not swelling my sins with the many tricks and cheats I have to play him. He comes

to me day after day, always with some strange question I cannot answer."

"And the lady was his mother?"

"Yes, that was Emma. She was shy of you, and would run away; but you will see her again by-and-bye. . . . I believe I didn't tell you of it. They are here altogether now. I talked it over with them. She was making herself restless and wretched, at the notion of my being here alone in this way, and they were kind enough to say they would all move up and take up their abode here for a time; in fact till, I suppose, there is no more occasion for them here. . . . I let Emma alone. I do not think there is another woman in the world who might go on as she is doing; . . . but it is a case, I think, upon which a woman should judge for herself, and to advise her would be to insult her. Allen and I both know her so well, and how purely single-minded she is. She thinks no evil, and so can do none. Suggest to her any earthly interpretations people might give to her conduct, she would not understand it. She would look as strangely at you as poor Jemmy did just now at me, when I talked to him about the violets."

"But suppose you should recover."

There is little fear of it," Edward said, with a faint smile. "But if I were to do so, I do not see that there would be any danger to her. . . . And as I see more of her, I almost think it might be better for her. It is easier to continue sentimental over a memory of a person who has loved you, than over a living one who does not. The common intercourse of ordinary life, with all its humdrum features, would very soon exorcise her, if it really is an evil spirit in her, and she wants exorcising; and if it is not, why not let her continue as she is. I do not think it is an evil spirit myself. You do not doubt *me*, I suppose. . . . Even if I were all I once was, or all I might have been, were I ever so disposed to take unprincipled advantage of her affection for me, I feel quite easy that the most cunningly suggested thought of what is wrong would fall on her like fire sparks into a heap of snow."

"The metaphor would seem better to apply to you," I said, "from what I can see. However, you may be right, and if you are, it staggers one's philosophy, and makes one's fancied knowledge of human nature look rather discre-

ditable. . . . But how can you be so sure she is so different from other women? What right have you to be so confident of yourself? to be so certain, as you seem to be, that if you were well and strong again, you could hold yourself so immaculate, and go on letting her entertain the feelings she does to you without being tempted? Why is it so impossible that, allowing herself to think, as you acknowledge she does, that she would have been happier with you for her husband, some day some unlawful wish may not raise its hideous head in her? some unlawful regret that she ever married Allen? . . . God forbid I should think it possible such wishes should ever be realized; but the shadow of a passing thought would desecrate a mind so beautiful as hers, and if there would be danger then, she ought not to be with you now."

Why, Arthur, you are so eager, I shall begin to think you suspect me of intending really to get well and run away with her. They are neither of them very likely. Were I to recover, and Emma by accident to be free again, I could never think of her as a wife. All hopes of such kind of happiness I saw into their graves

years ago. If I were to live as many years as I am likely to do days, I would not raise them out of it. They say that beyond the grave they never live again under the best circumstances, and I have given up letting myself take interest in any thing that dies.

Whatever uneasiness I might feel, I was soon set at rest about it. It was as he had said; at least as far as he was concerned. I had interpreted him by myself; I was afraid that, knowing he was so near his end, his weakness might unnerve him; and he might sink to sentimentalize with the lady in a way that, end how it would, might drop poison into her peace of mind, and canker her life with the thought of him. But it was not so. I had been alarmed at something in the tone of one of his letters; but if he had warmed at all at the first meeting with her, it was but with the warmth the living lend the dead by their embrace, and now he was cold again as ice. I fell easily into my place among them. She shrunk from me for the first day or two, but she soon became used to

my presence, as she would to a new piece of furniture, and took no more notice of me. . . . Edward spoke little to her, and his conversation never took a tone which would excite any tinge of morbid feeling. If he spoke to me of her, it was only with a kind of intellectual interest, as of any other phenomenon which struck him as curious. It was a *case* of disease to be *treated*, and he went on treating it as he had made up his mind it would best be got rid of, that is, letting it alone; taking the same kind of notice of her that he did of me; but almost always addressing himself to me as likely to make more out of his thoughts. . . . His mind seemed absorbed in contemplating what was coming upon him. He could still talk easily. His cough had left him, and his disorder now was a general wasting of the whole system, without specially affecting any particular action. He liked speaking, and to me, (jarring as his entire method of looking at things was against all I had been taught to think myself,) what he would say had a strange fascination. When a man is at the end of life, and can really cast his eyes round him and before him calmly, let his creed be what it will,

his senses have an unnatural clearness: the body falls away from around his mind when the earth for which it is made is fading away, and there is no more interest in self deception. And certainly, a faith which could go so resignedly and so hopefully to meet its end, had, must have had, something real in it. What Fowler's faith exactly was, I did not know: nor could I tell what his grounds of hope were; but that he was most earnestly and intensely looking for something which was to come, I was as sure as that I was myself. I had heard him say once that his belief in a future state was the only thing which had saved him from suicide; indeed he could hardly think any one who thought at all, who had trained himself to correct the impression of his senses, to weigh the future against the present, and could calculate the balance of suffering and enjoyment in this world, would be brought to remain in it, except from such conviction, with the means of escape everywhere ready at his hand. . . . One day I pressed him to tell me how he had contrived to fortify himself against a fear which most men found so insupportable.

"My only difficulty," he said, "is to know

what there is to be afraid of. . . . The only passion with which it affects me is curiosity; but I try to subdue it, because I think it is irreverent. . . . But why should I be afraid to die? Why should any man who believes in God? I believe that God has all goodness and all power. Therefore he will do with me what is best; and how can any serious person be afraid of what is best for him? Few men's lives can be more unsatisfactory to look back upon than mine—I know it. It is a point which now I cannot affect one way or the other. If it be good for me to suffer for it, I shall; and I shall accept with thankfulness whatever suffering is laid upon me; as I should accept it now if I knew where to find it in the best way. If we are to pass, as we are taught, more immediately into God's hands than we are here, what can there be for which we should be more grateful? into the hands of an all-wise Being, who knows all we require, and will save us from the infirmity of our own wills in *inflicting* upon us what we should flinch from inflicting upon ourselves? . . . You may say I shall have to suffer hereafter as a penalty, and not for my own benefit. . . I cannot see however how this

can be. If what is inflicted as a penalty is what I deserve, it must be for my own benefit, because it is always better for every one to have what he deserves. . . . The real evil is to have what one does not deserve, good or bad. And if it be hard for you to be convinced of it in your own person, you must at least acknowledge it must be in some sense or other *good*, and a manly person therefore would of course choose it. . . Pain is in itself an evil. It cannot be that God, who, as we know, is perfectly good, can choose us to suffer pain, unless either we are ourselves to receive from it an antidote to what is evil in ourselves, or else as such pain is a necessary part in the scheme of the universe, which as a *whole* is good. In either case I can take it thankfully. . . . But in the eternity of punishment, as you commonly hear it explained, I simply do not believe. . . . It cannot profit the *sufferer* if he is never to change. He cannot deserve it; because his sins have been in time, and between the finite and the infinite there is no comparison, and so no proportion. . . . If you take too, as I believe the history of even the worst man that ever defiled God's earth with his filthy presence,

and know it from first to last, in all its bearings, as the Almighty knows it, you would not say it deserved any very terrible retaliation; if, that is, it did really take its beginning here on earth—and what we are in this life is not, as some people think, a consequence of what we were even in some other state which we are not permitted to remember. . . . Eternal punishment cannot benefit by example; for all trials are supposed to be over when time is swallowed up in eternity. It may be that time ceases to all of us at our death; our clock has been wound up to go a certain period, and when it is run down, it remains for ever pointing at the same index; and then what we are at that moment will be for ever our reward or our punishment. . . I do not believe this, but it may be so; but badness, as I understand it, is negative not positive; the absence of good rather than the presence of evil; and its punishment therefore will be a privation of just so much happiness as corresponds to the good which is wanting. . . . That there is in man a principle of evil warring against good in him, and with a power and tendency to become positive and to absorb or annihilate such good as is left remaining in a

man at his death, it is blasphemy against God even to dream it. . . Evil for evil's sake man cannot love; by the law of his nature he is ever seeking for good, and the difference between men is only in degree corresponding to the degree of their knowledge. If men continue for ever as they die, what of positive good there is in them will find its answering state, and that is all."

"And we may meet again?" Emma said quickly.

Edward smiled. "If it is better—surely yes. . But we are in God's hands. There may be better things—though we cannot think of any."

The most painful feature about him was that he appeared to feel no regret at leaving earth, or any one upon earth. He had disentangled his affections so completely from persons and fixed them upon things, that he had resigned his mind entirely to the ideas of the better, and he felt only for that. I said something to him about this. . . "But why should I regret them?" he said. "I should not be taken away without it was ordered so. . . . Whatever creed we hold, if we believe that God is, and that he cares for His creatures, one cannot doubt that.

And it would not have been ordered so without it was better either for ourselves, or for some other persons, or some things. To feel sorrow is a kind of murmuring against God's will, which is worse than unbelief."

"But think of the grief of those you leave."

"They should not allow themselves to feel it. It is a symptom of an unformed mind. What pain they experience they should learn to take as a discipline, ἐν πάθει μαθειν; to submit themselves to be taught to see and love the world, and the things and people in the world, not as they are in themselves, but as they are in God."

What had I to say against this? But my heart shivered—but indeed I never thought of arguing with him. . Not for fear of exciting him, for he was so easy and quiet about all he thought, that nothing ever could excite him. But belief like his lies deeper than argument, and it was no use. . . . His belief was the result of his life, and of the cold stern method in which he had trained himself. . . . The little bit about his father, in one of his letters, was the one only symptom of a human heart I could find in him. Had mature life been given him, he might have come to think differently. I cannot tell. He might; but I do not think so. Passions

once entombed do not grow again, and Edward's faith was peculiarly, and almost necessarily, what a mind arrives at which has neither passion nor prejudices.

The month passed on, the weather continued beautiful, every day gaining in warmth, and length, and beauty. The sun rose up each morning out of the sea, and drove his coursers through the cloudless sky to linger longer ere he went down to his repose. . . . He was ever waxing as Edward waned, and the strong fire fed upon the heart of the expiring feeble one. . Each day we saw too clearly he was going and going. The oil of his life-lamp was wasted, and his feeble frame was now but the poor desolately wasted wick just languidly smouldering in its socket. . . . At one moment but the spectre of a flame glimmering on the edge of night, then with a fresh effort flashing up again, and then sinking once more, each new burst weaker and ever weaker. . . . Flicker unsteadily as did the body's light however, his mind, like his eye, grew ever brighter, and the steady flame burnt more intensely tranquil. Emma and I hardly

ever left him. Yet sitting by her as I did, day after day, I never grew to know her any better. Quietly she sat on there, happy to be there, and seemingly wanting nothing more. If he spoke she seemed, whether she understood it or not, to drink each word as if it was a revelation; but she seldom said anything herself. What passed if I was away I cannot tell. . . . I sometimes caught the low murmuring of her voice as I came into the room; but what she might have to say to him, she might well shrink from betraying to a stranger's ear. . . . To me she said but little, and that little almost mechanically. Every faculty was absorbed in Edward, and I thought it best to let her alone. One knows so little of the workings of a mind like hers, that one speaks at random when one tries to interest, and words the most kindly intended may be daggers. . . . She read to him if I was away, but never before me; for Fowler liked listening, and I suppose I could get through it more intelligibly. But at times he would want rest, and sink back upon his pillows, gazing out on the bright, the beautiful sea; and then I have seen her work drop upon her knees, and her clear blue eyes full *set* upon him with an

expression so strange and unearthly, that I felt awed, and shrunk into myself; thoughts unworthy alike of her and me, would at times intrude, and I have tried to drive my eyes into her heart and read what was written there; but always I had to feel the same as Edward had described on his first interview with her, and hang my head ashamed. My nature to sit in judgment upon hers!!

But at all times both she and Edward affected me unpleasantly. I could so little understand her, that she fairly frightened me as a creature of another world would. And Edward, beautiful as it all seemed, was in a state of mind so unlike what I had always considered Christian, that, little as even to myself I could find to answer to what he would say, I fancied his composure unnatural, and as if he had no right to it. So that there were times when I felt driven into myself, and scared and chilled by them, and it has been like waking from a night-mare, when little Jemmy would come running in with his little sweet beauty of naturalness.

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin;

then I should see Emma look like a true

earthly mother, and a tear glistening in Edward's eye which I knew sprung from the same human fountain as my own.

He brought us flowers every day. One morning he came flying in out of breath with hurry and exultation, with a wild dogrose, and a slip of briar, a sheltered nook in Anstis cove had warmed and nursed into prematurely blooming.

"Here uncle, I have got it; we've watched it every day, and it came out so slowly, and Nan said I should never be able to give it you, because you'd be gone away first. Ah, uncle, you are not going," he said with a sly look, "just yet; you can't go for a long time; you can't go till you get well. I remember when I had a cold, when I tumbled into the water. I was in bed, I couldn't go out, O, not, not, for I don't know how long; and you can't, uncle. Oh! I'm so glad you're ill!

"But, uncle, for shame, you told a fib the other day; you said you were coming back next spring, and Nan says you are never coming back at all; and if I am ever to see you again, I must go where you are going. Uncle, take me with you now? Why can't I go now?"

"No, Jemmy, you will come, I hope, bye and

bye, but not now. What would mamma say if I took you away with me now?"

"Oh! but mammy 'll come too, won't you, dear mammy? you'd always be happy with uncle Ned; and Nan too, we'll all go, Nan says it's such a beautiful place."

"Yes, Jemmy, it is a beautiful place. But you cannot come there just yet; you must stay here, and grow to be a man first, a great big man, and mammy 'll stay and take care of you, and make you a good man too."

"But, uncle, Nan says people do go, when they are no bigger than me; and directly we get there we are made into beautiful angels, with bright beautiful wings, like the birds. Oh, do let us go, and then we'll fly about up in the air; in the blue air, uncle Ned, up, up, up, and never come near this dark nasty room any more.

"Uncle Ned, do the little angels grow to be big angels up there?"

"Yes, Jemmy, when they grow wise they grow big."

Oh! I see, yes,—you told me the other day I must grow wise, when I grow big. But, uncle Ned, how can getting wise make them grow?"

"Wisdom is what they feed upon, Jemmy."

"What do they eat wisdom? What, is it like? Is it in books?"

"No, Jemmy, they don't have books up there. It is in God. The angels live with God, you know, in heaven."

"But they don't eat God?"

"Why, not exactly. That privilege is reserved," he said, turning to me, "for the children of earth." But the child's questions were getting perplexing.

"The angels, you know, Jemmy, are a sort of ghosts, and their eating is not regular eating, but a sort of ghost of eating."

Of all things in the world, it is the most difficult to know how to answer children. Their small minds, when they wake seem to see the unanswerable question first, just as the first thing their eyes see is the sky. One cannot say one does not know, for they cannot understand what not knowing means. One may not dare to tell them what is false, yet when our own idea is so small, how to convey even a part of that, without it being tied to any positive falsehood, is a problem that puzzles our wisest. Generally, however, the best loophole is some monstrous nonsense like this of Edward's. Jemmy was just satisfied with his ghostly idea.

I dreaded, and yet I wished to have some more direct conversation on his religious belief with Fowler; to hear him say one word which would assure me, and save me from my painful misgivings. Allen and I talked it over: we could give each other little comfort, as Edward uniformly avoided any specific reference to the subject with him; we agreed that taking occasion of the coming Passion-week, we would give the conversation a definite direction, and leave it to him to speak if he would.

An opportunity soon came. Newman's name was mentioned; one of us had seen a snarling piece of sarcasm in a newspaper about him.

"Yes," Edward said, "let them hoot on; they have driven out their Coriolanus, and these are their triumph shrieks. Let them see to it he does not come again in power; and no Virginia and Volumnia to beg him back again."

"It is an apt comparison," I answered. "Power has been his aim, and himself has been his God, from the first to the last."

"May my tongue be blistered then for giving it you," he said. "Oh Arthur, if you had known him as I knew him!" Fowler's face was flushed, and his voice shook as he spoke. It was

years since I had seen him so affected. . . "You know my story," he went on, "but I never told you in my dark hour I went to Newman. I was with him some hours, laying bare the secrets of my soul to him, and he left me with a feeling for him I never had for man. He pressed my hand in his, and dropped tears upon it,—yes, tears. Yes Arthur, your idolater of self, he told me my sins, and he wept for me. Throw away your cant about him; he was the truest and best friend the Church of England held at the hands of Providence, and she has spurned him from her, and set the seal on her own hollowness."

"Fowler, this from you? Do you believe him right?"

"Right, yes. He would have been right all, if you had not been all mad. . . . Any man who believes in God with all his heart, and does his duty to man with all his might, has right,—and right in a quite other sense than you seem to dream of. He may express his faith in what form he will, I revere him as a man.—The Church of England indeed, to dare anathematize him for want of orthodoxy. . . . To be sure she is lenient enough on the other side. All her members have to guard against is, believing too

much. They may believe as little as they please.

"But, Fowler, there are certain things we are taught are necessary."

"Yes," he interrupted, "I know what you would say. These certain things, I nnderstand to be belief in God, and belief in duty. Whoever has this faith in him clearly is in no danger, I believe, of exclusion from heaven ; at least in the present time, and in the existing state of knowledge. Whatever is beyond this, is unessential either way. The test of orthodoxy is how it affects our conduct. Experience shows uniformly, or so uniformly that it may be taken for a law, that whoever denies the being of a God, and the difference between right and wrong, leads a life disgraceful to him as a human being. I cannot find that the number of articles you introduce after these produce any corresponding effect upon character, or that the Socinian leads a less virtuous life than the Anglo-Catholic. I do not say that to surrender any point of faith one has been brought up in, plenary inspiration of the Bible for instance—is not *primâ facie* an objection against a man of an unhealthy state of mind, in him, and that

it is not found very often accompanied by a vicious life. But the vicious life is not the consequence of the wrong belief, it is more likely the cause of it. When unbelief and vice go together, it is not a partial, but a total unbelief; it may be only partially expressed, but the attack upon the Bible would really be only meant as a means not of getting truth, but getting rid of all obligation of all kinds. Our entire system of moral and religious belief, is so popularly bound up together, that men think if they can make a breach in a single point, the entire fabric falls. To rid themselves of the inspiration of the Bible, is to rid themselves of God and duty That is what they really disbelieve, and what really injures them. . . . If you can show the same or nearly the same amount of evidence, that when a man believes this article in addition to the other two, he is in virtue of this a better man than the equally serious person who cannot extend his faith beyond these, and your point is proved, at least to me. But you cannot; and till you can, I must be allowed to extend my charity, and love, and honour, and learn of Newman, as I love, and honour, and learn of Carlyle."

"You are certainly an admirer that Newman would be very proud of, Edward; with his creed he is likely to approve of yours, do you not think so?"

"I cannot help, and he cannot help his exclusiveness. It is part of the Catholic idea. I may love him without expecting him to return it. . . . But there are some fires which will burn out if they are let alone, and are only kept in blaze by blowing at them. What was the use of shrieking at him as you all did?"

"Would you have had us let him be then, and look tamely on while half the University, and half England were going blindfold, into what it cost Europe five million lives to free herself of? Surely we should be very basely betraying our high trust if we had not."

"I think you hardly know exactly yet what it has been these five million lives have freed Europe from. But if you suppose it lies with any one man, or with all the frenzied efforts of the whole race of man to put back the great clock of time, and to undo the work of centuries, I pity your faith. Catholicism stood for one idea then; but its teeth are drawn, and it is something quite other than what it was. It cannot

burn, and rack, and imprison any more,—you may thank the common sense of the world for it. Let it alone. . . . Let it say out what it has to say. What is true in it will live, and blend with the eternal laws of the developement of mankind, and the lie will as surely perish. . . . Do you not see that you are feeding the fire by your outcries, and exalting what would have passed away as the eccentricity of genius into a real enemy in martyrdom for truth: genius always has its eccentricities; and for a system which cannot work without ostracising such men as Arnold or Newman, the sooner we are rid of it the better. . . . Wieland says, Luther delayed the birth of the real religion which will be the faith of the manhood of the human race for centuries, by introducing popular clamour to influence what should have been left to the thinkers. And this wretched enemy of all that is bright, and noble, and chivalrous; this water bucket, this miserable negative Anglican-Protestantism is playing the same foolish part over again with none of old Martin's heroic daring to qualify it. . . But it is weighed in the balance, and found wanting. Its kingdom is divided, and thank God its days are numbered."

"Forgive me, Arthur, if I have pained you," he said; "I did not seek this. . .It is better left to be written, and be read in books, when no bitterness and ill-feeling can rise from it to poison truth, and poison friendship; we have none of us outgrown attaching blame to opinions, and thinking worse of one another when we cannot agree. . . . Few people can argue without being excited, and irritation, not conviction, is its only fruit. . . . Let us leave this, it is very painful."

It was a late Easter. Passion-week had gone by, and for the last few days, as if he had felt the spell of the awful season, the sun had veiled his face behind a heavy mass of cloud. A chilly east wind had folded up the opening flowers, and sent the young leaves shrinking back into the bud, and the dull yellow waves broke wearily and wearily along the shore. . . . The streets were hushed into an ascetic solemnity. The warmest face had forgot to smile; the wind bore death upon its wings, and many a poor sufferer who had lingered through the sunshine of

the spring, was cut adrift in this week of mourning.

Twice I passed the churchyard, and twice the same sad death pageant was waiting there to meet me; a hearse and a single mourning coach, with the same pale attendants standing shivering by, half forgetting, from the cold air and colder custom, the chilly home to which they had borne one they perhaps had known and dreamt they loved in life, and where bye-and-bye, they would have to be borne along like him. It was Saturday evening; Dr. ——— had been with us, and had taken leave of Edward with more emotion than was usual with him. As he went out of the door, he called me after him, to tell me we had better watch that night by him, as perhaps he might never see another morning. . . . He had not told Edward himself, but I felt I ought, and I did. He bore to hear it far better than I to speak it. A light pressure of my hand, and a thank God was all the emotion he showed, and he lay back and folded his fingers together on his breast, as if he meant to lay there to wait his end. But it was only to think over what he had to do. "My last sacrament—I hoped it should have been Easter

morning! No, better now, better now. . . . That should be for the saints, not for one like me," he muttered to himself. Then he turned to me. "Go tell Allen to come; Allen must give me the sacrament." . . I went to look for him: he was out. It was half an hour before I came back with him. As we entered the room, something I saw had been passing between him and Emma. What it was I never heard. If she ever spoke of it, it was to her husband. She was kneeling by his bed side, and clasping Edward's long thin hand, which was wet with her tears. I heard him say, "Emma, remember. It was wrong, it was really, it might have been a fearful peril. . . . Ah! they are come now for the last." Allen had been surprised at Edward's wish. He thought, we both thought, perhaps we ought to ask him why, in what sense he wished it. But there was no time to ask questions such as that. Why ask, when perhaps he had no strength to answer? and when let his answer be what it would, we could not dream of refusing him. Why press our poor misgivings on a soul so far above ours, so intensely peaceful? He had asked, was not that enough? Emma did not rise, but she turned her face to her husband, and her features spoke

more softly and sweetly to him than I had ever seen before. She took his hand; he knelt between her and Edward. We had prepared everything that was wanted before we came in, and he began the service. I fell back behind them. Edward spoke once, and only once, through it all. At the words, "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent," I heard him whisper, "Yes, I repent. To repent is to leave living to oneself, and to try to live to God. Yes, I repent." And then he folded his hands together again on his breast, and Allen's fingers gave the bread into his mouth, and held the cup against his bloodless lips. . . . He neither spoke nor moved again till Allen's blessing fell upon him, and then he broke into an Amen, so sad, so earnest, so musically sweet, I could have thought it had been the voice of an angel sealing the words of the priest.

"And now let me go to my God with one good act to offer at his knees. Emma—Allen—give me your hands." He laid them together, and clasped them in his own. "Emma," he said, "if your heart has ever lingered upon me with a thought which should have been his—if my form has ever lain as a shadow between you

two, and remembrance of me has shed one tear of bitterness into the cup of happiness you two should drink through life together, take this last scene away with you as all the place hereafter I shall hold in your memory, and my blessing and my prayers, to dash out this dark drop for ever; may the true love your hearts henceforth shall pour into each other, plead between me and my many sins before the throne of the Almighty. Love him, Emma, love him with as warm or warmer love than ever you felt for me. He deserves it far better than I. Good-bye, God bless you. The mercy which chose me to restore to you your child, twine the thought of me into a cord to bind you more close together. May you see your children's children, and peace upon your house!"

His voice grew firmer as he ended. He had drawn our strength from us into himself —we were all in tears . . . . . Emma fell into her husband's arms, and as Allen hung over her and kissed her, Edward smiled with a look of happiness so intense, that if such thought as was in him then might abide within him for ever, he would be blessed indeed. . . . . "Yes, it is accepted," he said, "it is ac-

cepted—my work is done. O God, I thank thee thou hast preserved me for this!

"Now, Arthur, I have something to say you. Take these keys, they belong to my writing-desk; you will find there a number of papers and essays which contain the main of what I have thought in the last few years of my life. They are almost all on the subject of which we have spoken together, and about which what I had to say seemed so much to disturb you. They are what they are, but I believe they express, however badly, much which the course of the world is tending towards, and if it lives long enough, will by-and-bye confess. Whether they have truth in them, God knows. He knows how I have laboured for truth, that I have earnestly and single-mindedly sought and struggled for that only; but our thoughts are so much governed by our history, that opinions blow on character as necessarily and as variously as the various flowers on their stems. Take them and read them; my thoughts are such as belong to me as a man. You know from first to last what I have been; you will be able to know something of the character for good and evil of what you will find in them, with

my life a commentary. For those two, they are at peace. I have done one good thing in life at least. Bring me the desk, please."

I brought it and opened it. It was full of papers lying all in confusion. I was taking them out. . . . "Never mind these now," he said: "there is one at the bottom by itself, give me that." . . . I looked, and found a few sheets of paper, written out with more care than Edward commonly bestowed on his compositions. They were tied together with a strip of black ribbon, and a title on them. "Jean Paul's peace in death." . . . "Do you know Jean Paul, Arthur? He wrote it for a time like this, and I translated it some time back for myself. Read it to me, will you? I am very happy now—happier than I thought I might be, for God has let me go without blinding me with suffering. But read it. . . . . I cannot talk to you any more. I have no more to do. It will keep the heart up in all of us."

I took it and read:

"And now the warm fountains of healing were bathing the languid earth, and streaming down from the trees upon the grass; the storm was fast passing, the thunder had rolled away to

the far off mountains, and the flashes came no longer like hot fierce gleams of wrath, but glanced mildly across the sky, like the light streaks in tears of joy. The sick man pointed upwards with his finger, 'Behold,' he said, 'the goodness of God. Now, my son, my soul is fainting, feed me—bring it food—bring it spirit food. But do not speak to me of repentings now . . . . I stand before my God in righteousness . . . . Speak as you spoke in your spring sermon: tell me of the Almighty and His works, and the richness of His love.' The young man's eye swam in tears. 'His Recollections!' He had designed them for his own dying, and he must bring them to his father's. . . . He told him what they were. 'Make haste, my son, make haste!' was the only answer. With shaking voice Godfrey began to speak, and burning tears streamed down the cheek of the betrothed maiden; she must have been thinking of two death-beds, the father's and the son's.

"Remember, in the hour of darkness, that the splendours of the universe once swelled in thy breast, and thou hast known the grandeur of thy being. In the star-sown heaven at night,

thou hast beheld one-half of the Infinite, and by day the other. Think away this phantom of room and roof, and the earth binding and crushing thee, and over thee as over their central point the universes are bending; worlds above thee, and around thee, and beneath thee, rolling on upon their course, and all the suns floating about their common centre, whose shadow is on thee—away along the eternities, through the all seen! Here in this void dreary place, thou knowest not what thou art. The void is only between the worlds, not round the world.

"Remember in the hour of darkness, of the burning time when thou hast prayed to God, and thy soul has throbbed with the highest thought permitted to the finite, the thought of Him who is the Infinite.

"The old man clasped his hands in prayer. Godfrey went on.

"Hast thou not known, hast thou not *felt* that Being whose infinity standeth not alone in power, and wisdom, and eternity; but in love and in righteousness? Canst thou forget the day when the blue heaven of day and the blue heaven of night raised their eyelids before thee, and thou knowest them from the blue orbs out of which God was softly looking upon thee?

"Hast thou not felt the love of the Infinite One, when it has shed itself down upon its mirror, in loving hearts of men; ay too, and in hearts of beasts, as the sun pours its bright day beams, not on the moon alone to light our night, but on the stars of morning and of evening, and on every wandering orb, the farthest distant from the earth. Remember in the hour of darkness, how, in the spring days of thy life, the grave hillocks seemed to thee as the distant mountain peaks of another world,—how when life was in its fulness thou couldst know the greatness, the worthiness of death. The snow-capped hillocks of the grave warm into new life the frozen prisoners of age and decay. As the sailor knows no long transition-time from cold to warm, but passes at once from a cold, ice-bound ocean, to lands all beaming with the warm pure life of spring, so do we land—or Christ remained a corpse for ever, and only His earth-dust was immortal,—so do we land, our ship strikes once, and the voyage is over, out of winter into everlasting spring. Canst thou look fearfully on thy parting, when so many poor short-lived mortals fling themselves, whole nations of them, in heaps, into the grave of war,

and sweep like night moths into the flame: when heroic champions of the Fatherland can bear young hearts and tender eyes, and fair unwrinkled brows, in the path of the hissing ball, and the sharp steel. Think of the desolation of war in thy own death, which is but one, and follow manfully the long march of great nations, and great heroes to the hallowed grave.

("'It was for myself I meant this, father,' Godfrey broke in,) but the old man quietly shook his head, and said, 'Go on.'

"In the hour of darkness rejoice," he continued, "that thy life has its dwelling in the great life of the Infinite. The earth-dust of the globe is inspired by the breath of the great God. The world is brimming with life; every leaf on every tree is a land of spirits and the All is inhaling and exhaling. Each little life would freeze and perish were it not warmed and sustained, by a life round wrapping and enveloping it. The sea of time glistens like the sea of waters with unnumbered beings of light; and death, and resurrection, are but the flaming valleys and flaming mountains of the ever rolling ocean. There are no lifeless skeletons, what seems such are but other bodies. Yet,

but for the universal Being, what were all, but one broad endless death? We hang like moss upon the Alps of nature, and inhale our being among the clouds that wreathe around their summit. Man is as the butterfly fluttering on Chimborazo, and high above the butterfly soars the condor in his pride; but small and great alike, the giant and the child walk free in one garden; and the insect of the summer day can trace the long long line of his forefathers through storm and foe to the bright pair that once played in the evening sun on the rivers of Paradise. Never, O never forget this thought which is now so clear and bright before thee, that in the fiercest pains spirits ever know, the 'I' holds on, as unscathed as in their warmest pleasures, yea, then grows clearest and most triumphant, when the body is breaking asunder in its agonies. The soul of man, like the wandering light of the moon, plays brightest in the wildest storms.

"Canst thou forget, in the hour of darkness, the great ones that have gone before thee; and that thou art but following in their steps? Stay thyself on that glorious band of spirits, who built themselves mountains on which to stand,

and beheld the storms of life not above them, but rolling far beneath. Call back to thy soul the majestic company of wise men, and inspired poets, who brought light and life to nation after nation.

"'Speak of our Redeemer,' the father said. The son went on.

"In the hours of darkness think of Jesus Christ, for He too knew them. Think on the soft moon of the Son of God beaming down on the night of humanity; let life and death be alike holy to thee; for He has hallowed both in sharing them with thee. His mild and lofty eye is now beholding thee, in this thy last cloud, and He will bring thee to His Father and thine."

"A slight peal of thunder rolled along the clouds; for a moment they parted open, and the evening sun slowly filled the room with fire.

"Think, in the last hour, how the heart of man can love; think of the holy time when thou hast offered up thy tears, eyes, heart, when thou wouldst have thought it gain to surrender all, thyself, thy happiness, to one beloved being. Remember—remember those blessed hours in which one heart was more to thee than a mil-

lion, and thy soul, a whole life long could find in other soul its food, and light, and life; the oak of a hundred years, rooted fast in the same old place, and gathering new strength and beauty along a hundred springs.

"'Do you mean me—me?' said the father.

"'I was thinking of my mother,' Godfrey said. Justa burst into tears, her lover's highest happiness, in his last hour, would be in the remembrance of her. The father thought of his lost one, and muttered slowly under his breath, 'Meet again—meet again.'

"Remember, in thy last hour," Godfrey continued, "Remember the days of thy youth, when life was before thee in its beauty and grandeur, when thou couldst weep at the birth of spring, for very joy,—when thou couldst soar to heaven on the wings of prayer, and see God upon His throne, the first and the last, the everlasting heart of love. . . . Remember, remember this, and close thy eyes in peace.

"At that instant, the storm cloud broke asunder in two huge mountains of vapour, and between them, as down a valley, the deep sun was gazing in beauty, beaming once more upon the earth with a mother's eye.

"'What a flash!' muttered the dying man.

"'It is only the evening sun, father.'

"'Yes, yes,' he continued; 'I shall see her again . . . . again . . . . and to-day.'—His thoughts were with her who had gone before him to her rest.

"Godfrey remembered what he had been that day composing in anticipating the joy of an earthly meeting; but his feelings choked him, and he could not go on. He might have drawn a beautiful scene; he could have told how when those who love meet again, after a long parting, the best feelings they have ever known are born again in a higher sphere, and as early friendships float in a life that is to come, so glancing backward into what is gone from among the flowers of the future, wreathes them into one garland with the fruits of the past. But how could Godfrey speak of the blessedness of meetings upon earth to one who was already gazing into the glories of the unearthly?

"There was a pause; a sudden motion in the bed; Godfrey started.

"'I remember in the hour of darkness—I remember,—yes, this—and this,—and this—and death is beautiful, and my parting is in Christ.'

"The old man caught his son's hand as he spoke, but he did not press it, it was but the unconscious spasm of the last struggle. He fancied Godfrey was speaking still, and said once more in clear and burning tones, 'O thou my all merciful God!' For the mock suns of life were gone out within him for ever, and God, the only true sun, stood alone before his soul. Once more he raised himself in his bed, and stretched out his arms, and cried, 'There, there, see the bright rainbow over the sunset, I must follow the sun; after . . . . with it.'

"He fell back and all was over. The sun's disc hung on the horizon—lower—lower it was gone, and the last rays slanting upwards spanned the eastern sky with a giant rainbow.

"'He is gone,' Godfrey said; his voice shook, 'He is gone from us to his God, in pure and tranquil joy. Do not cry, Justa.' But the tears he had only held back with strong effort burst in streams from his own eyes; he pressed his dead father's hands against his burning cheeks. It grew dark, and the rain fell softly over the darkening earth.

"The two lovers left the silent form, and went to weep their sun which they had lost—their

father who had passed away from the storm-cloud of life in a gleam of splendour, to the daybreak of another morning."

I ended. I turned to look at Edward. These beautiful words were his passing bell. His eyes hung wide, and fixed, and glassy, and his features were stiffening into repose.

"Yes, yes," he said, " I too shall—I shall see them again. . . yes; my father. Death—birth. Yes, it is morning—bright beautiful morning; . . . . open . . . . let me see . . . it is day— . . . . come to see me go. Push the curtain . . . . let me see the sea once more—the beautiful, beautiful sea." The lamp was paling under the rays of morning, which were streaming between the shutters. I threw them back, and there lay the sweet bay before me, half clear, half veiling its glossy surface in wreaths of amber-tinted vapour. The east wind had passed away, and left Nature in serene tranquillity, that heaven and earth might meet together in joy for the glorious Easter festival. The mist hung out over the horizon in folds of dazzling beauty, painted pink by the raybrush of morning. It seemed lying there as apparel for the sun to array himself in splendour as he rose.

"He comes!—he comes!—away I must go . . Open, open the windows . . all, all! God's blessing is in the breath of the Easter morning." His eyes were straining on the east. . . . . "See, see! he is come!" . . . . The mist opened suddenly, and the great orb was hanging in crimson majesty on the water, which was glowing like melted gold. Far along along the surface, a thousand thousand wavelets flashed triumph lit under the eye of their Lord. The Easter bells broke up out of the town with their glad welcoming peal, and every tree was joining in unison as the choral birds chaunted in with their unconscious melodies. For one moment four human hearts were thrilling under the spell of that entrancing scene—the next, and one of them had ceased to beat for ever. . . . . Yes, Edward was gone. The long clouded night of his earthly sojourn had past out into undying light, and his soul was gone in the sunrise to the day which shall never end. A smile still lingered on his lips; they were parted as if to speak, but the last words had melted into a sigh which had winged the spirit to its fulfilling, and the shell was left silent in beautiful desolation.

The hearse and the mourning coach stood once more at the gate of the churchyard; again a few solitary mourners watched by a grave-side, while the earth fell sadly on a brother's last dwelling-place, and his memory began to fade out of life as his body to resolve into the dust. Another week, and we were all gone. Allen's voice was heard no more in the chapel, and Jemmy was never seen again on the pier or on the downs. They could not stay in a place which were crowded with such recollections; they sought and found in a distant part of England a true home and a second day-spring of life; and if the hearts of those above are warmed by the happiness of those they love on earth, then surely Edward is not losing his reward for the last good deed which was given him before his end.

Mine was a more melancholy occupation, to fulfil his last command to study through the history of an unhappy mind, which started out of nothing, and found its way through philosophy to faith,—found its way to a faith, a faith he could die in as he died; but it were idle for me to try to deceive myself into thinking it was the faith popular at the present day. A profound belief

in God and in God's providence, lay at the very core of his soul; but all beyond it seemed but shifting cloud, at a distance forming into temples and mountains, and skyey palaces, but seen close and examined, all fog and choking vapour. He appeared to believe and disbelieve alike every religion which had ever worked among any number of mankind from the beginning. Religions were all myths. In the region of the supernatural, you were far away from fact, and the religious histories were the symbolic growths of an idea, marking a step in the progress of mankind. How exactly he would apply his theories, how far he would extend them, how he could face the history of the world with such a clue to its interpretation, is not for me to say. . . . He has left his ideas but in germ, and elsewhere they are growing into form which may be seen. Till such time, let them rest. I had thought of publishing some few of the more finished essays, if I could find any to which any degree of the word finished could be attached; but after turning and turning them over, I found it hopeless, and I thought it best to sow them where, if there be power of growth in them, they may come to fruit in after time; where let them all for the

present hide themselves, except these two fragments. . . . . The first seems part of an unsent letter to some one who had remonstrated with him for writing *in* the "Lives of the Saints."

"June 1843.

"I thought you knew me too well to be surprised at my taking to the "Lives of the Saints," taking to anything that offered itself. You know I affect to be a philosopher who does not believe that truth ever shows herself completely in either of the rival armies that claim so loudly to be her champions. She seems to me to lie like the tongue of the balance, only kept in the centre by the equipoise of contending forces, or rather, if I may use a better illustration, like a boat in a canal, drawn forward by a rope from both sides, which appear as if they would negative each other, and yet produce only a uniform straightforward motion. I throw myself on this side or on that as I please, without fear of injuring her. The thought of the great world sweeps on its own great road, but it is its own road; quite an independent one . . . not in the least resembling that which Catholic or Protestant, Roundhead or Cavalier, have

carved out for it. All you have to care for is, that you make an acute angle, not an obtuse one, with the line of its course. . . . Fancy the French Revolution and modern Germany, the lawfully begotten children on the bodies of Martin Luther and the Alva persecutions. Fancy Sir Robert Peel round the neck of England, as tight as the old man of the sea round Synbad, within ten years of the Reform Bill. . . . I am not such an ass as to claim any superior wisdom for thinking in this way. Only a very weak person indeed thinks all the goodness and talent on his side, and all the wickedness and stupidity on every other. I suppose my mind is set to its way of looking at things as others are set to Catholicising, and others to Protesting. Of course I feel myself infinitely below the great men, (even in these days when great men are so little,) who represent the exclusive claims of the opposites. It is the water which is pent up into a narrow bed that has the force in it, not what spreads itself out in platitudes. The genius of the rival powers is nearer to mankind and walks more grandly among them than the great arbitrator who stands so high up in the middle above their heads; and if I am born

under his star, I must be content to be a looker on in the world's drama, not an actor. . . . But for these lives I certainly do wonder Newman should have asked me to help him with them. Newman, with his profound knowledge of human nature, and who had so lately given me a proof how well he knew me . . . . . Within two months of this, I might naturally be surprised to be asked by him to write Lives of Saints. . . . It was impossible I could really feel towards them as he did, or believe the stories I was to have the relation of. Yet simply to sympathize with his view, and with an effort for a particular purpose, to throw myself into his way of looking at things, though it might not interfere with what I was to produce as a composition, he at least would think the most dangerous trifling, and the result of a complete moral disorganization. Of course I do not think so, but he would. . . . Perhaps he fancied it was an employment which would do me good. . . . But he must have known that in my state of mind, even if I did in theory believe that that kind of sanctity was the real thing one was to live to arrive at, I could not heartily sympathize with them as yet, and it was a most dan-

gerous piece of proceeding to start with, to assume and to pretend so much of it.

"You will say this holds equally of all our young clergymen, or at least of far the greater part of them. I know it does, and few things sicken me more than to hear fellows spiritualizing away in the pulpit, and prating of heaven and hell and every holy mystery, whose single preparation has been a course of port wine and fornication."

The other is very different; it has the appearance of having been written off hastily, under the feeling of the moment directly after what it relates.

"February, 1844.

"I have had a fearful nightmare this afternoon in Magdalen Chapel. I went to the evening service. I was too late to be taken into the choir, and I had to remain in the ante-chapel. . . . At the best times one is little more than a spectator there: it is very hard to join in the service. But this evening—it was not a dream, for I was broad awake,—it was not a thought, for I tried to shake it off and I could not. . . .

I was under a spell. Out of the dark ante-chapel I was gazing up into the brilliantly lighted choir, up long rows of white choristers and surpliced priests, past fantastic forms carved quaintly out of the old black oak. . . . By the light of two giant tapers which hung before it, I could see in the far back-ground the beautiful white altar, and dim above it, as behind a veil, looking down, the awful features of the Saviour stooping under His Cross. The organ swelled up the chapel and echoed down again upon me. The sweet voices of the choristers answered each other along the walls, and down along the fretted roof. Inside all was so beautiful; all seemed an outpouring from the divinest depths of purest devotion; all there were God's own chosen ones. . . . Outside, where I was, all was dull, and dark, and dreary. The west window frowned above me with the awful judgment day stained in upon its surface. The moon was setting behind it. I could see the outline of the dreadful figures sweeping off with their writhing victims into a huge abyss, which was yawning for them, down the jaws of a monstrous serpent fiend. On the pavement, ranged round the walls, or lounging up and down, were those

who, like me, were spectators of a scene they did not wish for a nearer share in; loose, idle dilettante worshippers of the beautiful, drawn there by love of sweet sounds, and women with that upon their forehead which seems to say a love less pure than that had brought them to a scene so holy. . . . I leant against a pillar; the scene hung before me like a living picture; but where I was passed away from me, and I fancied I was in the other world. Inside the chapel was Heaven, where the angels were hymning their praises before the throne of God, and I, alas, was not among them. . . I had come too late, and all that was given to me was to be a gazer upon the splendour of a scene from which I was to be an outcast for ever. My dwelling was under the scowl of judgment, and my everlasting companions the scorner, the voluptuous, and the fool. Alas for me, they were happier than I. They could taste no higher pleasure; they could listen to the eternal melodies of the angels' harps, and their base souls could yet find their pleasure from the far-off sounds and visions of the serene beauty of Heaven. They had sought no more, and what they sought they

had found. . . . I alas had come to seek the best, but had come too late. I was doubly curst. I felt I might fall back and be as they, but that I would not do. . . . I longed still for the better and still could see it ; I loathed the outcasts I was thrown among, but my portion was with them—the portion I had earned for myself; and the crystal gate of Paradise was barred against me for ever.

"I heard a voice say, such is the penalty of those who seek Heaven their own way, and not by the way of the sanctuary ; they shall see the glories they crave, but they shall be taken with their pride, and their eternal inheritance is with the evil. I thought I bowed my head and answered: 'Thy will, O Lord, be done! I must dwell with them, but I will not be of them. I will turn still to Thee, and desire Thee, if I may not find Thee.' The vision past. I heard the priest's last blessing thrill around the heads of the favoured ones ; a brief pause, and the organ broke into a long sweet voluntary, and underneath the music, two and two, the white worshippers past slowly out among the profane. But when they came

among us they became of us. They mingled in the crowd, and became like the crowd. Close by me one surpliced figure whispered under a deep overhanging bonnet. I caught the words—they were an assignation."

THE LIEUTENANT'S DAUGHTER.

ἄνω ποταμῶν ἱερῶν
χωροῦσι παγάι.

MEDEA.

THE LIEUTENANT'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

I HAD often been haunted by Hooker's definition of time, as "the measure of the motion of the heavens." If time depends on the movements of the great bodies in space, as they go time goes, at a rate parallel to theirs, or rather at the same rate; as the hand of a clock would go which was set to mark exactly the swings of the pendulum; so that it would seem, that if from the interposition of some unknown cause, the planets were to double their velocity, the earth fulfilled its orbit twice as rapidly as it does now, and every other body equally accelerated

its speed; time must also, following their bidding, go twice as fast too. . . . If they went slower, time must go slower, if they stood still, time would draw rein and wait also till they moved again. If a general bouleversement of the system of the universe were to take place, and they moved the other way, time would roll backwards along with them, and unfold the coil of all the incidents it has brought with it.

Then I came to remember that as we measured time, and indeed all things, not according to the real order of nature as it is in itself, for of that we know nothing, but according to the order in which phenomena present themselves to our senses; so if it were possible in such a way to dispose things on our planet, as that the visible system should only *seem* to reverse its movement, the sun to rise in the west and set in the east, and evening and morning exchange their order and position, time and all it had brought with it would ebb like a tide.

Let a railroad be run round the earth's girdle, (there is nothing absurd in such a supposition, a single line would be sufficient, and the equinoctial is ready made to the hand,) and set a carriage running on it in the same direction

with that of the earth's motion and with double the velocity, exactly the reverse order of the phenomena would in fact be brought about. . . . From to-day we should pass into yesterday, from yesterday into the day before; month before month, and year before year, the earth would uncoil its life, and with it all the lives of all her children with all their doings, fates, and fortunes.

It appeared to me so certain it would be so, that I used to make it a matter of serious speculation, and try and see what would be the effect produced on the mind by looking at death at the wrong end, and the prospect of passing out into eternity through the gate of infancy instead of old age. . . . If "that we are" implies, that we shall be, it implies of course equally that we have been. It is only the change of names, the past becomes the future, and the future the past. Eternities lie each side of life, and we are equally ignorant of both Forward and backward are but modes in which we express our relation to ourselves and things, and there is nothing more unlikely in such a change in fact taking place, or more unnatural in the character of it, than in the tide of a great river turning to

ebb again when we have seen it for half a day flowing continuously one way. . . . I say there is nothing *a priori* impossible, or even improbable in such a change some time or other taking place in the order of nature; philosophically, perhaps it is the readiest way in which we can conceive the ultimate passing away of the universe; still less is there anything unlikely in some of its effects being brought about artificially in the way I have suggested.

I have mentioned the fact of this speculation of mine, because it may help to account for the incident I am going to tell. . . . I call it incident, because it was a thing which befell me; I do not mean to say it befell me externally, but it befell me internally—a phenomenon of mind which may or may not admit of natural explanation.

Perhaps my speculations had so disposed the particles of my body, that of themselves, when the control of my volition was taken off, they presented it to me in the form of a picture. If so, it is valuable as a fact of science, for it was methodical, and so would prove that the particles of body have a power of harmonious production. . . . But this is a point I leave to

the psychologist. All I know about the matter is, that a series of incidents were presented to my notice; not in a dream, because I was awake,—not produced by an act of will, because if so, I could have controlled them, which I fonnd I could not. Not forced upon my mind because I could turn away from them, and several times did so by a very simple process; not shutting my eyes, but opening them, and pouring in another set of objects on my mind, just as an ordinary window pane, if you look directly at it, transmits the objects to you, which are beyond it; but you may so dispose yourself that it shall serve as a mirror, and show you yourself, and the room which is behind it.

——— and I were travelling on the west coast of Ireland; we were about a good deal among the people, and I either from carelessness or bad fortune found myself one day confined to my bed with all the symptoms of incipient small-pox. At the end of a week I was in high fever; sleep, heartless friend that it is, forsaking us at our greatest difficulties, had taken leave of me from the commencement of my illness, and seven long weary nights and days I had lain sulkily tossing, and as long as I

was strong enough grumbling grandly. In vain I counted thousands upon thousands, solemnly humming above my breath, and courting silence by monotony of sound; it was all to no purpose. The eighth night, as the long July evening closed in at last, I thought myself particularly ill used. I had been twice bled in the day, and my body was weak and exhausted. The control on the nerves was taken off, and my imagination began to revel in its emancipation, and dazzle me with a thousand brilliant images. . . . If I could only go to sleep, what dreams might I not have? for once in my life, real poet's dreams, and to be so disgustingly cheated of them! My feeling of disappointment however did not last very long. I found that although I could not go to sleep, imagination was for once disposed to be polite, and was going to stay up with me and entertain me. . . . I suppose it was a kind of delirium, but it was only half delirium, for the whole night I was conscious: I could at any time collect myself, open my eyes, look about at the objects in the room, and reflect on what I had been seeing. . . On the other hand, I had no power at all (or I did not feel that I had) over the images that

presented themselves to me. It was all as really and truly external, and independent of my power of willing, as the ordinary incidents of orderly daylight life.

In the early part of the night I found I had a sort of Aladdin's lamp, and was waited on by troops of the most charmingly obedient genii. In the wretched place in which I was, I had been able to get nothing in the way of food which did not nauseate me. Visions of fruits had been tantalizing me; had I had a birthright, I should have been as profane as Esau, and sold it for a bunch of grapes. Now with my genii, how I would indulge myself! no sooner had I wished, than the markets of Covent Garden had poured their treasures at my bed-side. I was in the act of stretching out my hand to seize an exquisite peach that lay blushing like a young bride for the touch of my lips, when a light blue flame began to play and flicker round it, and made me start like Faust at the witches' draught; but my genii allayed my alarm, with telling me their fire never hurt any one who was not to belong to them. . . . That was pleasant, and emboldened me to take liberties. I had long been troubled with various lurking scepticisms;

there was certainly no danger, and now was the time to get them satisfied.

Our books, I said to one of them, inform us that you gentlemen are not an independent fraternity; you have, they say, a certain superior to whom you all owe allegiance, and if all accounts be true, a person of no small power and capability, and playing a considerable figure under the rose in the history of this world of ours. . . . Now I want to know first, whether there is such a person?

"Oh, certainly!"

"Might I see him?"

"He will have the greatest pleasure in waiting upon you."

And he came. A great curtain was stretched across the room, and on the surface of it, like a figure in a phantasmagoria, was hung the image I had summoned. What it was I cannot tell; it has passed away like the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and I remember nothing but my disappointment. It was a meagre anatomy; I could have made a far braver one myself. I begged for more light I remember, for a clearer vision of him; but this fact was the remarkable one about him, that the more I had the light multi-

plied the feebler became the shadow, and at last, as I went on increasing and increasing, it seemed to melt away from off the canvass, and the white rays fell off unstained and unbroken.

But whatever the master was, my genii were splendid. Nothing seemed too great for them, all power was in their hands, and for the time they were slaves to me. What should I do next? All the world before me, and nothing but to take my pleasure in it, and find employment for them.

The great dead heroes came up out of their graves for me to look at; stately cities, temples, palaces rose at my bidding, and the splendours of infernal art were lavished on their decoration; and still my genii were at my elbow crying for work, work. Like a boy with a holiday I was trying to make the most of my time, and wasting it in thinking how best I should use it, and the spirits were impatient only of idleness, and left me no rest with their crying. Unless I could make an effort, I felt it would turn into a vulgar nightmare, and I was thinking in despair of Merlin's remedy and the ropes of sand, when my old speculation flashed across me. I was unwilling to be driven to Merlin's plan; it was

such utter waste, and besides it was not original, so I turned with a proud voice to them, proud of my own cleverness; and I said, "Go, reverse the order of the universe, and make time flow backwards. . . . In a moment they were gone! The next, and I found myself among my friends in the common life of common days; there it was all the same, yet all so altered, for all was going back. There I saw my own family, my father, mother, brothers, sisters; there was my second "*me*," there we all were, altogether as usual, and all living upside down. Yesterday, with all yesterday had brought, came up one thing before another, and then the night, and then the day before; and the wonderful part about it was, that to the people themselves, and to the other "*me*" I saw among them, there seemed to be nothing out of the way in it all, it was a perfect matter of course. The scene where I first found myself, was my own house, a short time before my illness; but I soon discovered I was outside, and independent of it all. I could transport myself at will, up and down, backwards and forwards, along the time river, and see any one I pleased at any period of his progress or retrogression, with

whatever he was, what he was doing, and what he was thinking. To be sure, how strange it was; and it seemed to them as if it had been always so. They went upwards from hunger, through repletion to their meals, and down from them with a spring to hunger. The aged heavy-laden patriarch gathered up his children into his loins again, and laid off his burden of experience year by year, and walked lighter and gayer, and more foolishly for it. Nature followed the same inverted rule. You saw the tea coiling up like a water-spout, out of the tea-cup into the mouth of the pot, and no one looked surprised. Great ships came up out of the sea, and joined their seamy planks, and drowned sailors gathered up their lives again, and back, sternforemost, they went to port. Effects and causes had changed places. Final became efficient, and efficient final; and the odd people had got their systems of philosophy that accounted, as they called it, for the order of the phenomena of nature, and they fancied they understood the principles of things. Some were contented with observations of facts, and generalized experimental laws for themselves; others were more hardy, and proved their theories

form the constitution of the soul, and the necessities of the Divine Nature. . . . But what struck me most, was the very comical idea they all had, that they were quite at liberty to do or not do, that they were perfectly free agents with uncontrolled volition, when they were not only going along a course so rigidly determined, uncoiling, and uncoiling everything, so exactly as it had been; but it was their very own footsteps they were treading back along, and they could not see it. At first it perplexed me to make out why they did not recollect; but I remembered how hard it is to repeat the most familiar sentence backwards, and how utterly unlike itself it looks, and sounds if spoken so, or written so. Only now and then a sound will strike which seems familiar; why, or how, one cannot tell, and so it was with them in their lives. Now and then a flash of conviction, that a word or an action or a scene was familiar to them, gleamed into their minds; but strange things followed close, and effaced the momentary image; the clue was but glimpsed to be lost again, and the wiser of them put away such trifles as beneath the notice of the serious mind.

When the first perplexity was over, and I had got my nature set to watch them systematically, (how long it took I cannot tell, for time, as may be supposed, was in strange disorder with me,) I employed myself in watching my own self, and other persons I knew, into earlier periods of their lives, and comparing, and contrasting, and trying to make out in what idea their character had crystallized. . . . Then I would try people I did not know. I would watch something they had done, and form an opinion from it of what they were, and test my judgment on the order of circumstances along which they had passed, and which had determined them. My judgment of character I might be right in, my estimate of action was invariably wrong.

Scherazade, in a thousand and one nights, could hardly tell all I must have seen in those few hours. Out of all of them I select a single one, not in itself, perhaps, nearly the most remarkable; but it has the merit of being the most complete, because one of the genii arranged it for me, and obliged me to see it through, and through the close of it himself attended me, not letting me, as my own taste generally suggested, fly off from an unfinished

experiment, to the fresher fragrance of novelty. It was the last, and I remember it the best, and it has the further advantage of being the easiest to tell from the way in which he showed it me. I suppose he wished it to make an impression, for although he did not interfere with the backward order of the scenes, he reinverted each separately for me, and I read them straight off in natural order, just as in the translation of a Hebrew book, when the European version stands on the opposite page to the original, the Semitic order and arrangement of pages is preserved, and the beginning is at the end, while the words and lines and verses are reversed, and we read down each page our way without difficulty.

CHAPTER II.

When the first scene opened, I was in a churchyard; it was night with a still clear air, and a sky serenely brilliant. The moon in silver splendour high up as the summer sun at noon, and the stars dressed out as if they were keeping festivals in heaven. The dew-drops glittered over all the graves with a white lustre, which made the glow-worms pale; they had crawled into the black shadows, where they could still shine without a rival, for fear the insects of the grave should forget the homage which they owed them, and turn idolaters of the images of the sky they saw mirrored there in those crystal globes. The leaves of the great yew-tree, and the ivy that, vampire like, clung round it and fed upon its life's juices, were turned to frosted silver, and rustled crisply as

the owls flew in and out. The tall arched windows were lit with spectral light, as if from spectral tapers; one might have thought the spirits of the old dead monks were busy there fulfilling the night services and night worship the unworthy living had forgotten. I stood below the great tower, where high up hung the deep-voiced symbol and chronicler of time: slowly, surely, steadily crept on the spectral finger its allotted path, pointing as it went to the numbers on the dial-plate, like the hand on the wall of the Royal Feasters' Banquet Hall. Ever as each half hour rolled off into eternity, out rung its awful death knell; and far above glistened the warning cock the remembrancer of prayer; so far, far up it seemed from earth, as if inlaid into the sky.

The great ocean lay stretching away where no eye could follow, from under the hill, still as I had never seen it. The moon and all the stars lay then each with its single image clear and unbroken, as if on a polished sheet of steel. I could have fancied I was on the edge of the world, and looking down into another sky. So awfully still it was, there was not a voice, there was not a sound, save when an old owl was

scornfully wooing his mistress with his sad serenadings, and one far-off nightingale whispering its sweet good night. So still it was, that although I knew well there was something to be enacted there, which I was brought to witness, the noise of a footfall made my cheek as pale as the pale earth; it seemed to splash into the stillness like a stone into glassy water. It came on and on over the path towards the church yard stile; heavily, yet quickly, as the steps of a tired traveller within sight of his journey's end, and mustering his expiring energies for all the effort he wanted more. It came on, it came in, and under the shadow of the black yew-tree a woman passed up among the graves. For a few moments she stood still as if uncertain which way to turn: perhaps she was fainting, for she clutched a tombstone convulsively, and only so just saved herself from sinking to the ground. Presently she collected herself again, and staggered past me into a corner of the churchyard, where two graves lay apart from the rest close side by side; and then it seemed she had reached her end, for she flung herself down upon the grave and lay there motionless.

I followed her, for I felt I was charmed against sight or hearing, and sate down too on the far end of the mound opposite her. Her tattered shoes had not served to cover her feet, which were wounded and bleeding; her dress was torn and soiled, and her long dark hair, which flowed out unconfined from under her bonnet, was all the shading which hid her neck from the moon. The haggard profile lying up in the light on that mournful pillow, showed deep fierce lines of famine, and the twenty summers she might have numbered must have served her to drain out the dregs of the cup of bitterness of life. So thin she was, the grass seemed scarcely to bend under her weight. I could almost fancy I saw it through her.

Between the two graves, crossing at their head and joining them, was a single stone, the humble monument of those who slept below it. A *Hic jacet*, with the names Lieutenant Gray and his wife Ellen, was the unpretending inscription, with one verse below out of the Bible:

"Now they sleep in the dust: Thou shalt seek them in the morning and they shall not be."

The husband had been dead eight years; the wife had gone to prepare his place twelve years before him.

And the woman that lay there, what was she? The living monument of those two! the poor forlorn one come *there* to *them* for shelter! Was this all that was left to her of home? She had fainted where she lay. Oh! would that she had never woke again! But she did wake. A short, short space of life remained for her for one more miserable deed before she sank again into the trance out of which is no waking. She turned slowly, and with languid pain raised her head. What hideous tale was written on those ghastly features!

"Oh God," she said, "and I am alive still. And there is no other way."

She caught the gravestone in her long thin fingers, and strained her eyes upon the words that lay written there, as if to be sure that it was indeed real, and was not all a frightful dream. . . . And there lay the two names all cold and passionless, and froze her gaze till it was stony as themselves.

"Oh mother, mother, father! are you here? here? And will you not speak to me? Tell

me, tell me I may come to you. . . . Do you hate me? Speak! Oh, they will drive me from them too. I am a degraded outcast, and I may not lay beside them in their grave. Oh, no, they do not hear! They sleep in the dust. I shall seek them and they shall not be. . . . No, no; they can, they can. They hear me, they do hear me, and they hate me."

She put her hand to her head.

"I am mad," she said. "Oh, no, not mad, would I were! It is all true; there it is, yes, there is old home." I followed her eyes—across a little valley towards the sea stood a white cottage in a small group of trees, glittering in the moon, and beyond a tall mast with a yard and cordage, marking the station of the coast-guard. . . . "Old home—all there; all, all the same. Why is it the same? or why am I not the same? . . . There is the old porch and the old room, and there is my little window. There is a candle burning there on the ledge where I used to put it when I said my prayers before I went to bed. . . . Who put it there now? Is she saying her prayers?"

Her eyes hung glazed upon the house; suddenly she drew herself up and strained herself

her knees

"Oh, Father Almighty, hear me. Father of those who have none else. In misery and wretchedness I cry to Thee to let me die. Punish me, if it must be,—and I am not punished?—but not here. Why am I to drag about with me this loathsome life; to be scorned and hated, and trod upon, and to hate myself worst of all? There is no hell worse than this; for here it is all hate. But God is just, and they told me once God was merciful. Is there no place in all the universe where He can hide me? There no mercy here. . . . God is not here; I will go to God. Oh, Father, if the prayers of one like me can reach to Thee; if there is any mercy in heaven for a wretched castaway, oh, kill me, or give me a sign that I may come."

A shooting star flashed across the horizon, streaking the dark sky-vault with a trail of fire, and a startled sea-bird's scream was heard dying away over the water. At the same moment the church clock pealed midnight, marking the death of the day, and the candle in the cottage window was extinguished.

"He hears me, He hears me!" she cried. "I may go." . . . I saw the fatal phial in her

hand, and sprung forward to snatch it from her; but my grasp was lighter than the lightest breath of summer air. Another moment and it was gone. . . "Father, mother, I come,—He says I may come, He says it! You will take your child to you."

She fell across the graves. Her head sunk pillowed above her sleeping father without a struggle. The right arm drooped heavily round the end of the mound, and the slackened limbs stretched down along the hollow between the graves. It was all over, and the moon shone on as clear and calm, and no star veiled its light. The warm body grew stiff and cold as the blood thickened in the veins, and the bold owls flitted round it as it lay and hooted on in solemn mockery.

CHAPTER III.

THEY were busy next evening at the printing house at Exeter. . . The types were setting for the weekly paper, click clicking into the iron frames, off which were to roll the great electric conductors of modern enlightenment. The thick flat reams of paper were lying damp to the hand of the journeyman. The columns were all full, all but one staring blank which had been left open for an advertisement, which had not yet arrived. The patience of the superintendent ebbed with the minutes. Our own intelligencer must draw again upon his magazine for some laughter-moving or harrowing incident. But our own intelligencer, alas! responds but dully to the call. He had overstrained his inventive faculties already that day in the creating of facts, and he had turned them

out prematurely to refresh themselves over rum and water; so that now, when put into harness again, he could no more move than a tired horse put away for the night led out unexpectedly to a heavy carriage, and a mountain road.

It was hoped that, with pen and paper, his hand might move mechanically to its work, but it was found capable only of an Irish outrage; and on that bank the newspaper had already overdrawn its account. The superintendent was hanging doubtingly between the last Pickwick and the least threadbare of his devotional sentiments, when a young clerk who was lounging smoking in the compositors' room, and had volunteered his services in blowing snuff up the intelligencer's nostrils, now offered to supply his place for him. He cocked his hat on one side, dropped upon the stool, and dipped his pen into the ink. Now, what shall it be? some young lord pitching into the police, eh! or a spice of scandal? The Reverend ——, whose name we forbear to mention, out of respect to his sacred office. . . . Or what d'ye say to something touching and romantic? I was down at Exmouth to-day at the Royal. They were

sitting up-stairs on a girl they'd found in the churchyard in the morning. Poison, so they say; took it herself, little fool. You and I, Jack, would have taught her better, if she'd come to us."

"Aye, that'll do, Ned; anything so you're quick about it,—trim up."

"Well then, here goes."

Touching and romantic.—"No, hang it, that won't do either; we mustn't make it interesting." Vice and suicide.—"Aye, that's right. Vice and suicide.—This morning an inquest was held at the Royal Arms, Exmouth, on the body of a young woman —"

"Female, Ned, female; woman don't sound respectable."

"Well, on the body of a young female, who was recognised by several of the inhabitants as Catherine Gray, and from her appearance must have been lately given to abandoned habits. (That's moral, eh, Jack?) She left Exmouth, it will be remembered, a year since with a gentleman, (whose name, out of deference to his honoured and respected relatives, we think it best to conceal,) under circumstances betraying peculiar ingratitude; and it was for some time

a subject of great alarm to the friends of the gentleman, that she might have been privately married to him. From this fear, however, they were happily soon relieved, as he was recovered from his abandoned companion, and she had not since been heard of. A person answering the description of deceased had been seen the day before in the neighbourhood in a state of extreme destitution, and this morning she was found in the churchyard quite dead. It appears the unhappy creature must have retained some spark of better feeling, as the spot where she was found lying was the burial-place of her father. Dr. Wilson examined the body, and gave it as his opinion that death had been occasioned by poison. A bottle containing remains of such deleterious substance was found at her side, and it was too plain she had met her end by her own hands. There being no evidence to the contrary, and from the general appearance of the deceased, the jury returned a verdict almost immediately of temporary insanity. A slight difficulty was raised by one of the jurors, on the ground that the spot she had chosen argued the presence of reason; but as it could not amount to certainty, he withdrew his objection. Our

excellent coroner, whose taste and feeling is so well known, complimented the jury highly on the discernment they had shown in their verdict: and after giving it as his opinion that no person in proper possession of their faculties could be guilty of the daring and desperate act of the unhappy person before them, concluded by an eloquent address on the miserable effects of the indulgence of unlawful passions, and trusted that all young persons in the neighbourhood would take warning from the dreadful example before them, how they listened to "the soft whisper of deceiving love," when offered them in any but honourable fashion.

"There, I think I have been and done it; give us another cigar, Jack."

"Who was the fellow, Ned?"

"Why that cursed scamp young Carpenter. I hope the poor girl's ghost won't plague me for laying it off on her so."

"I am doubting about that bit at the end, Ned—the other part's capital; but I'm afraid the lines about the deceiving love won't do for us. Sir John won't like it. . . Of course the fellow is a scoundrel, and the uncle not much

better for that matter; but it don't do to say so. However, perhaps it may go as it is."

And so ended the earthly sufferings of a human soul. Unheeded by any mortal man more. Unwept by any eye save, perhaps, God's angels. And that wretched record is all the world ever knew of a tale so mournful that if a poet had been found to mould it into music generation after generation would have wept unnumbered tears to wash out their sister's wrongs from the records of the earth.

CHAPTER IV.

Back rolled the great wheels of time; whizzing by me so fast, the objects all melted into haze. Glimpses I saw of lamplit streets and glittering rooms, and men and women, and I caught shrieks of frantic revelry. Once there seemed to be a pause, and before me was a gaudy saloon, in the middle of which a young woman was clinging passionately to the knees of a man; the man was rudely trying to spurn her from him, while another woman in paint and feathers, and rustling in splendid silks, had her hand twisted into the hair of the first, and was tearing her away from the man; and I thought I saw in that unhappy one some traces of the figure and the features of her I had seen the end of in the churchyard. But the scene swept away again, and the saloon faded away, and incident

after incident whirled by me like a train at full speed when you meet it, till I found myself on the platform of the Railway Station at Paddington.

An elderly well-dressed woman alighted from a carriage followed by one whom I knew now for Catherine, my Catherine, the same Catherine; but oh, how different! The same full melting eye, the same long raven hair, but health sat smiling on her cheek; her rounded elegant form moved lightly on the bounding step, and though then too a line of sad thought there was across her forehead, yet there was light buoyant hope there also, and her eye was gleaming with some eager expectation.

"Now, where will you go, my dear?" I heard the elder lady say to her; "I have a carriage waiting here and I can take you where you please."

"Oh, take me to him," Catherine said; "my husband, of course... You say you know him—you know where I shall find him?"

Her companion smiled. "You hardly know how young men live in London," she said. "You say he is not expecting you? You may not find him."

"Let me go—let me try," she answered eagerly.

"Oh, certainly, dear; you can go if you like. I do not think it wise; but his chambers lie in my way, and I will drop you there."

The rapid crowd edged them into the lady's vehicle, and they were gone.

"How can I ever thank you, madam?" Catherine said. "So kind—so very kind, and to an entire stranger."

"Henry Carpenter's wife is no stranger to me, my dear. I am only too glad I fell in with you. I shall give it him properly when I see him, to leave such a pretty creature about in this way. What on earth could have become of you, turned out in such a place as this by yourself?"

The carriage to which they were consigned rattled on and on, street after street; at last it stopped at a door in a handsome street, where the lady said Mr. Carpenter's chambers were. They knocked; the door was opened. It seemed the servant must have met before the older lady, as glances of some kind of understanding certainly passed between them.

"Is Mr. Carpenter at home?"

"No, madam; out of town,—returns to-morrow."

"My dear, I think your best plan would be to come with me. I can never leave you here alone. You will meet no one but my sister, and I will take care of you till he comes back. Indeed," she said playfully, "he doesn't deserve that I should let him have you at all after treating you in this way."

Why should Catherine not go? so good, and so kind a person, and Henry's friend too. Would not he be better pleased, was he not sure to be better pleased, to find her in such good hands? And yet there was something, a something she would not, perhaps could not explain to herself, that made her wish to stay where she was, and wait her husband's coming in her husband's chambers.

What can the elder lady know of the arrangements in a lodging-house? What control has she over them that the servant's eyes wander to her face to learn what to answer?

Mr. Carpenter's rooms are locked, he has the key with him. There are no other rooms in the house disengaged, he replied at last.

"You see there is no help for it, Mrs. Car-

penter," her companion began, again laughing. "Come with me, you must, the fates say so. Nay, if you talk in that way," (Catherine was still hesitating at the open carriage door, and muttering faint apologies about inconveniences and intrusion,) "I shall be quite angry with you."

With a show of unaccountable misgiving for which she bitterly reproached herself as so ungrateful, she resumed her seat in the carriage, and in a few minutes they stopped before a large showy-looking house in the corner of Soho Square. On a brass-plate on the door glittered the names of the Misses Arthur.

The rap rap of the coachman was answered by a slovenly bold-looking servant girl. . . And the two ladies passed into the hall. . . . The girl's air and look was so unpromising, that the lady made a sort of apology.

"Our establishment is not large, you see, Mrs. Carpenter. The house is far beyond our two or three servants, and it is impossible for them to keep themselves very tidy. Open the drawing-room door, Harriet, and let my sister know we are come. We! what was Catherine expected then?

The two ladies turned into the room. No one in the house but the Miss Arthurs' two servants? Surely there is laughter, and many voices too—What is it? Only a door slamming, and the wind upon the staircase? It did not sound like that.

The room too was an unpleasant room. It was one of those rooms that are kept for occasions; and being so seldom lived in, looked coldly on the occasional intruder. The walls were hung round with pictures; but if beauties, they were the beauties of an Eastern harem. You could not tell what they were like for the veil of yellow they were buried behind. There was fine furniture certainly but it did not lie about easily. The place seemed conscious of its finery, like a shop-boy on a Sunday in his young master's clothes. The dirty housemaid threw the blinds up and got a fire into the grate, and departed to search of the lady's sister. As she turned at the door, she darted one glance on the unconscious girl; a glance so cold and devilish, it might have been caught from the faces of the fiends that sat watching Eve under the tree.

Miss Arthur joined them in a few moments;

in person large, bony, and resolute looking, far less attractive in appearance than her sister, several years older, and a flush upon her cheek, which might have passed for joy at the return of her sister, and the introduction of her friend's wife under her roof, if it had not stayed too long and been so uniform. . . . Miss Caroline Arthur introduced Catherine, and explained briefly the circumstances under which she had met her. The usual questions were asked and answered, and Catherine was presently let escape to her room. The elder lady had eyed her, she thought, rather impertinently, but she had played the part of a plain spoken, honest woman, whose vulgarity might be only old-fashioned bluntness; and as soon as the poor girl could breathe freely, and think over freely the whole of the circumstances, she repented of her foolish misgivings, and congratulated herself on having fallen into kind and hospitable hands.

But we must not leave the sisters in the drawing room.

"She'll do, Car., this one," said the old lady; "but who the deuce is she—Carpenter's wife?"

"She says so."

"What, our young fellow?"

"Yes, but she's not married to him for all that; there is no ring on her finger, and Carpenter's wife wouldn't be left to travel up to London by herself in that way, looking for him."

The old lady whistled. "So sly and so innocent looking: we must watch her; she'll be playing her own game, if we don't look out."

"No, you're wrong there. No fear, she is soft enough. She's not married, but she knows she ought to be, and she has no idea yet, the pretty darling, she is not going to be."

"Ah! I see—weak, weak . . . and you think she will not like the exchange we'll provide for her. Ha! ha! that's all the better. Your whiners and whimperers for my money. One's used to that, and knows how to manage it. . . . But your sharp ones, curse 'em, that know how much one and one make, they leave us old ones in the lurch. I curse 'em, but I like 'em too, the dears; they're like what you and I were, Car. I should like to have seen the old woman that could have made her game out of us. Well, talent is talent, and there's the end of it."

"And Lord William offers two hundred pounds you said, if it's quite fresh. That 'll do. Is he coming here to night?"

"No, to-morrow."

"I think I'll go then and see Carpenter in the morning, and find out if he'll bid, or if he means to do anything. We sha'n't keep her in very well through to-morrow, without making her suspect, unless I can speak to him. She wanted to go straight to him. I told her I would show her where he lived, and we stopped, as we came along, at the Branch. . . . The fool at the door said he would be there to-morrow, instead of swearing he didn't know when. He missed my sign, so she will be off there in the morning, and we sha'n't keep her from finding out. . . I'll go to him; I think I know him pretty well. He has left her, and he won't take to her again. I will make him write her a bit of a note that shall settle the matter. She'll go wild and do what we please . . . Get the women out of the way; you had better go with them yourself, I think. She heard their cursed laughing as she came in, and she won't believe it's the wind if she hears it again."

"They are off, Car., by now. I sent 'em off

before I came down. Pretty dears, bless them! . . . I love them like my own daughters. Yes, I'll go with them, and will drink our new young friend's health, and speedy arrival among us."

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Henry Carpenter was sitting in his Temple chambers breakfasting next morning, in his arm-chair and dressing-gown. He was languidly sipping his chocolate, and dawdling over the pages of Paul de Kock, when his servant opened his door, and persuming on a general order to admit all women at all hours, ushered in Miss Caroline Arthur.

"Well, mother damnable, what do you want? got anything new?"

"So good a friend as Mr. Carpenter has always the earliest notice of our arrivals. We have."

"The more shame for you, you old witch. Poor thing! she must be in high favour with the devil, whoever she is, to have been put into your hands."

Mr. Carpenter was very moral in his estimate of other people. It was his saving clause that he was to get to heaven by.

"Well, I don't know, Mr. Carpenter; you gentlemen are so kind as to patronize us,—our trade would not be good for much else. We do the thing respectably enough, and it's the demand that makes the trade. Nothing low ever comes to our house, and if we didn't do it, somebody else would. We are very kind to our young ladies, and if it does not last very long, it is merry enough while it does."

"Yes, kind, precious kind, as the butcher to the calf he fats for the shambles, only it is the living bodies you trade upon, not the dead meat. Where do they go when their year is out?"

The old woman shrugged her shoulders. "Way of the world, sir. Good example again. Nobody is much better. You keep your people to work for you as long as they are any use to you, and when they can do no more you turn them off, don't you? Every body does. Make what we can out of one another, that's the way with everything. . . . Eat one another if you like it, like the beasts do. I don't see much

difference; some ways of eating are thought respectable, and others are not, but it is only a question of names. You law gentlemen, for instance, you get fat on the sins, as they are called, of your fellow creatures; the more they sin, the merrier it is with you. And I don't see either, that we are any worse than your rich gentlemen from the country, that spunge the poor creatures under them, till they can spunge no more, and then come and spend it up here in their carriages, and horses, and fine houses, leaving just enough at home to keep the work going, as you put just coal enough on the fire to make the kettle boil.

"If our girls are sharp, they can do very well Coronets have been made out of our house. If they ain't, why they take their chance. We put them in the way, if they can't go along it, it's their fault, not ours. . . . However, most times we are only the friends of the friendless. You good gentlemen pick the flowers, and when you have had as much of the sweet as you want, you fling them away in the road: we only pick them up and put them in water."

Mr. Carpenter did not seem quite easy, for

he swore at the woman, and told her to go. He did not want anything.

"This time, for instance, there is no harm done,"—she went on without shewing any intention of moving—"work all ready cut out. Came up from Clifton yesterday,—met her in the train."

From Clifton? The name seemed to startle him. He looked up, and caught Miss Caroline's eye glaring at him with devilish intelligence.

"Come, Mr. Carpenter, old friends like you and I shouldn't be falling out, we may want each other again, more than once. You began to be so moral, I stretched you a bit to punish you,—but it is as well to have it out. I fell in with your girl you left at Clifton yesterday. She was on her way up here, poor little thing, to see after her husband. I found she had no idea where to look for you, so I took compassion on her, and we have got her at home."

The law student turned pale, red, and pale again. His hand shook. He writhed in his chair. His eyes fell ashamed before the woman he had but a moment ago been reviling for her wickedness.

"Come, come sir! it is no use to make a fuss about it now; the thing is done,—you did it. There is nothing so ridiculous as doing a thing, and then being ashamed of it. You did what you had quite a right to do, if you could of course. What, you a man, and fooled by old wives' fables! . . . The girl was pretty, and you were in luck. Leave the thing to me. I will save you all trouble, only you must tell me a thing or two first. Who is she?"

The old woman's mocking tone strung his pride up. If one frail fibre of pure feeling did vibrate for a few moments through him, he could not show such weakness before her.

Why, she was a sort of nursery governess, he said, at my uncle's, down at Exmouth. "My aunt treated her worse than the housemaid, and the poor thing was so pretty, I thought I could not do better than make up for the sins of my family by being kind to her. It ended as such things often do end. There were faults on both sides, I was too forward, she was too yielding. . . . I went off to stay at Clifton, and, like a fool, left her my direction. My aunt found out what had happened, and of course turned her out of doors. She came up to me, and I had not the

heart to say no to her, when she begged to be taken in; so she stayed with me for a month, till I began to get rather tired of the thing. I was doubting what I had best do, when one morning came a letter from my uncle. Curious, I have it here in my desk—listen!"

"My dear Henry,—Lady Carpenter and I have learnt, with extreme sorrow, that the unworthy creature whom we found it necessary to dismiss from Belmont, has found an asylum under your roof. Indeed we have been told that you are privately married to her. We will not believe until we are forced that any member of our family can have disgraced the name he bears by such an act as this; but there is no doubt that she is with you, and if my wishes have any influence, and if you yourself have a wish to continue to be regarded as my heir, you will let me know, by return of post, that your connexion with her is at an end, for ever."

"Your affectionate uncle,

John Carpenter."

"What could I do, you see? I couldn't afford to turn my back on ten thousand a year.

It is not creditable either, living with a mistress, and marriage was out of the question; it was ridiculous enough in her to follow me at all. Why the deuce couldn't she have got a place at a milliner's in Exeter? A thousand things she might have done. Well, I paid the lodgings as for three weeks, and left her with what money I had, and came up here. Something I thought would be sure to turn up for her—things always do, or nearly always. What possessed her to follow me here?"

"And is this all?" said the old woman steadily.

"Yes, pretty well all," he answered.

"She said something about a marriage. But you are not married?"

"I should hope not," he said.

"Was there a pretended marriage?"

"How dare you suspect me of dishonour?"

"Then there was a promise?"

Carpenter blushed. He tried to force out one indignant denial; but his tongue hung fire, and he was silent.

"Oh! It is nothing, you know," the old woman said in a tone of encouragement; "a

matter of course merely; one always does say so under the circumstances. It means nothing, every body knows that; only one likes to know exactly what the facts were."

"Well, yes then," he answered, "there was something of the kind I dare say. But how could she be such a fool as to believe it?"

"Now I know it all, then," she said. "Well, then, here is what I came to say to you. I will undertake to save you all further trouble about the girl. She shall be in good hands, and well provided for. In return for which you must be so good as to write a note which I will dictate to you."

"You dictate to me? How dare you?"

"Oh! I only mean it for your own good. If you do not like it, I will go home, and let her have your direction."

For a moment he seemed to hesitate. What, is there one feeling of remorse or mercy lingering in that ice-walled heart? "I will write myself," he said; "I cannot see her, but I can advise her, and I can help her."

"That will hardly answer my purpose," she replied. "You will pardon me. I have had

longer experience in these matters than you. I am professional, you are only an amateur—you must take what I say."

"I *must* !"

"If I am to help you, you *must*."

A pause again.

"What will you do?" the woman said. "If I go back without your note, I must tell her where you are, and she will come to you. If you receive her, or provide for her, what becomes of Belmont and your ten thousand a year? Sir John will hear of it. I may choose to let him know myself."

"You! I think I may venture that. He is likely to take notice of information from you. . . You!"

"Yes, I. Venture it if you will, and see. He will find it worth inquiring into, if he does owe it to me. I want this girl for my own purposes, and I must have her. If you see her or do anything for her, I shall write to Exmouth. If you do not, she has not a relation in the world, you allow that, and she goes out upon the streets. Now, where will she be best off? There or with me?"

Once more the same baseness which made him leave poor Catherine at Clifton won the

victory. "Give me the pen," he said. "Now what am I to write?"

"My dearest Catherine,—I regret exceedingly you should have taken a step so unadvised in following me. If you had remained at Clifton, a few days would have brought you a letter, which would have saved you the expense and danger, and would have suggested to you some line of conduct, which might in the end lead to your good. I am sorry I must tell you, I can never see you again. I have received a positive command from my uncle, who is my guardian and second father, not to do so, and I need not tell you how sacred are the commands of a parent. What is past cannot now be helped, but it may be repented of. Let me entreat you, dear Catherine, to follow my example, and let our future good conduct atone as far as it may for our sins. I grieve too, that my uncle's orders forbid me to assist you further than by my advice. But it is my greatest comfort to know that you are in the hands of my truly excellent friends, the Miss Arthurs. They, Catherine, are truly good; they will think for you, and decide for you. I have explained to

Miss Caroline Arthur the history of your connection with me, and she has promised to take care of you, and see you well provided for. Her feelings as a woman prevent her from taking the same view of my duty as I do myself, and I fear I suffer in her esteem, but my conscience assures me I am right, and I am happy in believing the regard she once felt for me is transferred to one whom I have unhappily been a means of injuring. Let me beseech you to place implicit confidence in her; and believe me ever, dear Catherine,

"Your affectionate friend,

"HENRY CARPENTER."

"And you dare to think I am going to write that?"

"Oh!" the lady answered, "it is merely professional. If you do not like me for a counsel, you had better send for some other advice.

"And I am to call you my truly excellent friends?"

"I think on this occasion," she said, "we have the honour of showing ourselves so. I have come to you to relieve you of a very embarrass-

ing piece of business, and all I ask you in return is a few lines on a sheet of paper."

"Which, my truly disinterested devil, is a piece of as infernal villany as ever was enacted on God's earth."

"Nay, nay, Mr. Carpenter, don't take God's name in vain. . . . We shouldn't be too hard upon ourselves; we are neither of us very immaculate, you know; and I really don't see what there is in the letter you need so much object to. A grain or two extra in the scale, when it is already so many pounds overweighted, is no such great matter. Only look at it in this way. Here is this girl that you have brought,—*you*, I say, have brought into a difficult position. She is there; the thing is done, it is not to do. It is too late to be moral about it; you should have thought of that before. . . . The question is, what is to be done now? You are not such a fool, I suppose, as to think of marrying the girl, or keeping her yourself, after your uncle's letter which you read me."

Mr. Carpenter bit his lip.

"You cannot be such a fool. . . There are men in the world (pray do not be offended) as

attractive as Mr. Carpenter. We need not believe a girl who admitted him prematurely to her favour, is likely to confine herself to him; he would be scarcely wise to incur a certain loss at such a risk. Nay, now, I see I must be peremptory. I can have no shilly-shallying. Listen to what I say. If you do anything for the girl of any kind whatever, I shall let Sir John know of it,—mind that. It is as well to have it a clear point. I tell her where you are she will come to you, and I will suppose after what I have said you will not receive her. So then she will wander about the streets; she falls into what hands she may, the last and most likely into that of the police. She is taken to the office. The story comes out, and Mr. Carpenter's name is likely to hold a prominent and not very creditable place in the papers. . . You read me your uncle's letter: I may think it desirable to furnish her with a copy of it. I believe I recollect it. One of those precious documents it is not easy not to recollect. This I think—(she repeated part of it.) In fact, it strikes me I may go myself to the police court. It would not be undesirable to establish myself in a respectable character before the world, and I may fight her cause for

her. In that case I shall certainly advance this letter you have been weak enough to read to me. It will appear in the papers; it will be commented upon. Your uncle will recognise it for his own, and your chance of Belmont will be nearly equal with mine."

"I wish you and Belmont, and the whole thing, were at the devil together," he said.

"All in good time," answered Miss Caroline. "On the other hand, write my letter. I will guarantee that the girl shall be well taken care of; in good hands; in a good position; one, in fact, where if she pleases, with her face and steady conduct, she may raise herself to anything ——"

"Good hands. Yes, raise herself; aye, by-and-bye, to such high honour as yours is, I suppose. Curse you. To be led step and step down your hell's ladder, and leave her own soul in the devil's treasure house, while a legion of fiends bring up her body again to set his traps in, and do his work for him. . . . Oh, fool, miserable fool that I am!" he cried. . . "It is not enough that I must have the recollection of what I have done already to this unhappy woman clinging to me like a nightmare, but I am to be

made the slave and tool of this infernal hag, to snare her down to deeper perdition."

"I can wait till you have done," said Miss Caroline.

"Wait, no, d—n you—you sha'n't wait here for fear the roof fall on our heads. Give me the pen, since—it must be done."

"Oh! I am glad you are getting reasonable," she said. "Write the letter and give it to me, and I will relieve you of my presence immediately."

He wrote off the concluding sentence and signed it. "There," he said as he gave it her; "if I am damned for this, I shall have the pleasure of seeing you in flames ten times hotter.

Miss Caroline took it, folded it up deliberately, and put it in her pocket.

"I may say *au revoir* then, *there*. Should any thing of the kind occur again, you'll know where to come. Good morning."

"I do not know that I do want the girl so much after all," she said to herself as she walked down stairs; "but I like to make these young gentlemen stoop to me; it is entertaining. The mean, dirty, cowardly rascal. . . . She doesn't deserve as good as she'll have for being taken in by such a fellow."

And what were the feelings of the "such a fellow," to whom she was so politely alluding? He had begun to rave about his chance of damnation at the end of the scene, but he had no real idea that there was any danger of his getting it. God never would venture to damn a baronet with ten thousand a year, or even the heir of a baronet. It was only a way of speaking. . . Fortunately for him his pride was so hurt at the way he had been tricked, that it diverted his attention from his conscience; and as Catherine was in a way indirectly the cause of it, he was not in a placable mood towards her.

"Confound her," he muttered, "why the deuce hadn't she strength of mind enough to keep me off? and of all people in the world the one she must choose to fall in with is this damned old woman. Really one doesn't know what one ought to do. . . A man can't marry a woman he has seduced. If they are weak and foolish enough to let you persuade them, why, as the old hag said, they are sure to let some one else by-and-bye. And if I was to do anything for her, why she must—she'd be sure to come to that in the end any how, and I should

be losing my chance for nothing. It is best as it is, perhaps. . . But the old brute, to dictate to me,"—and Mr. Carpenter returned again and again to the first bleeding wound in his self-love, and found it far harder to reconcile himself to that, than to the fate into which he had assisted Catherine.

Still it is not to be said he was quite easy. Awake he was conscious there was something not quite satisfactory; and in his sleep he was disturbed by visions not the most delightful. Indeed, I believe a whole week had passed before he began to regard himself again in his looking-glass with perfect self-contentedness, and pursue his easy meditations on the discovery of truth, (for Carpenter went out as a philosopher,) and his theories of universal philanthropy, and the new reformation.

On Catherine the letter worked as Miss Caroline had anticipated. Her honour lost, her lover false, of course it was a terrible shock to her; but the taunting insolence of the letter had scattered every feeling in her heart, and

even her pride—little pride as then was in her —came to her help, and in a way assisted her to bear it. Miss Caroline's sympathy was most judiciously administered; neither making too much nor *too little* of her fault, and of course execrating the heartless cruelty of her friend. . . Had she known he had dared to insult her by calling her his friend, she would have torn the letter to atoms and thrown it in his face. The future was not alluded to. A fortnight was let to pass, and she was asked to see nobody; even the elder sister had been banished to preside at the Branch, and they had the house to themselves.

At the end of the fortnight, a visit of a day or two was announced from *my nephew*, Mr. John Arthur, a young man rising in business at a country town. This was Lord William. His terms rose when he saw Catherine. Nothing within the compass of his fortune was to be thought too great; he was put in possession of her history; but the rose was sweet enough still to make him forgive the taint upon its perfume. He put himself under the control of Miss Caroline, and consented to be guided by her advice . . . He continued under his feigned

name; paid repeated visits, and prosecuted his suit diligently, as if for honourable marriage. He was not at all listened to at first, and but coldly listened to afterwards. . . Catherine had been too severely wounded to be able to think of any more affection; and she felt too degraded even to allow herself to think of it. . . The truly kind explanation, however, of Miss Caroline, so ingeniously contrived as to undermine her own natural principles in conveying her nephew's feelings, induced her at last to listen. Gratitude might warm into affection; and an honest man who could love her in spite of what had past, was at least entitled to her regard. . . This was all they were waiting for. Drugs did the rest, and the unhappy girl awoke one morning to find herself a second time betrayed.

Lord William, of course, swore unalterable affection, disclosed his rank, accounted for all from his passionate love of her. Miss Caroline let fall a corner of her veil, and advised a continuance of the *liaison*; and Catherine, at first overpowered with horror, and then, as the whole thing began to disclose itself, bewildered at the hideous devil-web in which she found herself entangled so hopelessly, yielded in desperate

miserable acquiescence to Lord William's entreaties; and believed, or persuaded herself she believed, his oaths of unalterable attachment.

For her share of the transaction, Miss Caroline received 500 guineas. . . . In three weeks the jewel had lost its novelty, and the pretty plaything must find the fate of all pleasures, that are only pleasures till they are obtained. . . I cannot go on with the nauseous history of the downward progress. One cannot tell how powerful to make persons recklessly degraded is the believing that they have already become so. . . . She surrendered herself in despair to what appeared to be her destiny; there was no escape for her except suicide, and for suicide she was not yet ready, her cup was not full. She was pitched along from hand to hand, the period of each new friend's constancy growing shorter and shorter at each transfer, for Catherine was too miserable to please; till at last her haggard painted face was seen nightly in the theatre or the saloon, and the wretched victim was only saved from madness by the self-forgetfulness of unbroken intoxication.

One night — it was the scene which had

seemed to pause before me for a moment in the shifting of the slides—at one of the rooms in which the unhappy beings meet together like the hack horses of the livery stables, for the accommodation of the public, they met again, face to face, the destroyer and the destroyed. . . She flew to him, such as she was; she could not resist it. She flew to him and clung around his knees; so changed as she was, so degraded as she felt she was, she forgot the history of her wrongs in the sight of him again; she forgot it was he who had disgraced, betrayed, and insulted her, and she hid her face and sunk ashamed before him on the ground. She was ashamed even to raise her eyes to him. . . . He pushed her from him with a brutal jest; but she clung to him still. His companion, jealous of another claimant intruding upon her right, tore her rudely away by the hair, and she had sunk fainting on the floor; in which state she was carried out into the street, and laid down on the nearest doorstep to recover as she could. . . . This was the last; from that doorway she had crawled away to Exmouth to die.

CHAPTER VI.

Again the scene shifts,—I am now I know not where. A lamp is beside me, and a bundle of letters in my hand. They are tied together in a paper band, and carry written on them, Henry C —— to E. Hardaway; but the seals are broken, and it seems I am to read them.

"Belmont, Aug. 16.

"You have a good right to grumble at me, my dear Hardaway; a fortnight is passed since the day I promised to be with you, and I am still here, and I have not written. But you see I have taken a large sheet now, and I am going to fill it; and so I shall quit all scores with you for the reason I shall give you for my non-appearance will make a long and amusing epistle. You say true, that my uncle's house can have

no great charm for me; my aunt's vulgarity and his emptiness and conceit, are so intolerable that, night after night as I go up into my room, I grind the heel of my boot through the carpet for very spite that I am forced to bear their name. And then the nauseous way in which they patronize me,—introduced at parties as, 'My nephew Henry;' as if I, I were to be indebted for the consideration of society to my kinsmanship with such a family. . . The house is always full of people, but I cannot enjoy anything. Few of them are well-bred enough to hide their contempt for my uncle (I can pardon them for feeling it). They know very well they are conferring infinite honour upon him; with Lord this, and Sir John that, it is all plain sailing. He has more money than they have. They being little suns in their little neighbourhood, throw a kind of reflected lustre on whoever they choose to smile upon; he pays their election expenses, and this service they are content to accept as the price at which they will sell themselves like wax candles to shine at his parties.

"You remember our Ethics Lecture at Oriel, how old —— used to hammer into us that

doing went before knowing, and you acted on a principle ages before you understood it; well, my good aunt and uncle are just cases in point. They act on this principle of buying and selling, and yet they have never confessed it to themselves; nay it has never once occurred to them. Their plebeian instinct teaches them what they must do, but vanity has hold of their understandings, and they flatter themselves they are adored for their own sakes. . . My uncle means to found a family; and he has not obscurely hinted to me that his daughters are to have good fortunes, but that I am to be his heir. Ten thousand a year is not to be sneezed at, yet I often doubt whether it is worth the price I have to pay for it. Verily it is enough to make one despair of this world, or at any rate of the thing we have made of it, when a man like my uncle is the sort that its system smiles upon, and that rises from nothing to an earl's fortune. What if the money should exert a formative influence upon one, and model whoever owns it after the idea it was acquired upon! Experience luckily does not confirm this theory, and one comforts oneself with remembering Vespasian. Well, you may fancy I

should have found an excuse before this to be off if there were no other attraction; but there is, and the history of this is the part of my letter which is to excuse and compensate for my absence. . . . I had several times seen a very pretty girl about with my young she cousin on the beach and in the garden; but as nobody ever mentioned her name in the house, and my aunt, if she ever said anything to her, always spoke in the same overbearing impertinent tone in which she did to the rest of the servants, I concluded she was merely a nursery-maid; and as in these matters I make a point of following Lord Chesterfield's advice, and eschew all low intrigues, I contented myself with admiring her beauty at a distance, and exercising the wholesome discipline of self restraint. Well, about three weeks ago, a few days before I was to have made a start of it for you, I was strolling about the grounds just after sunset, and happened to turn into one of the little vulgar brass cupola'd summer-houses. I sate down to wonder at the row of coloured Vauxhall lamps standing as sentinels round the melancholy pond, (they have shut out the view of the sea). The seats are all pink cushioned, so that a very

trifling uneasiness I felt in arranging myself, made me alter my position to ascertain the cause of it. I found I had sate down upon a book, and I experienced the same kind of emotion as Robinson Crusoe at the foot print in the sand. A book at Belmont! My uncle had sent the dimensions of his library to his bookseller, and since the thousand volumes had taken their places upon the shelves, not a soul of them had had his repose invaded. . . One I had once tremblingly taken down, but the dust met me with such a look of beseeching reproachfulness, that I put him gently back without waking him. . . . And now here! out of doors in a summer-house, the very epicureanism of studiousness. What are you? I asked, hardly daring to touch him. I made an effort, gathered courage, and took it up. . . . The Revolt of Islam!—a second thunderstroke. What garden fairy; but imagine a fairy in a summer-house with pink cushions, and the sea shut out by clipped box-trees and coloured lamps. . . It was a fairy though, and at that very moment she came in upon me to claim her forgotten property. It was the girl I had seen with the children. . . She started, and seemed uneasy

when she saw me; she recovered herself however immediately, and then she had an advantage of me. She had seen me every day, knowing who I was, so that I was less strange to her than she to me. For me, not Anchises could have been more astounded when the goddess disclosed her majesty to him. This graceful elegant creature I had taken for a maid; this . . But I know you hate rhapsodies, and I shall be keeping her waiting if I describe; which was just what she did not do, for her embarrassment was gone in a moment. She apologised very quietly for disturbing me, she believed she had left a book there, if I would be so good as to allow her to look for it. . . . But at that moment she caught sight of it in my hands; she coloured and hesitated; I felt my advantage instantly. I might keep her with the help of the book, just long enough to get something said, which should serve for the beginning of an acquaintance. You know I manage these things very gracefully; I had time for several very choice sentences before her face resumed its natural colour, and then I gave her the book directly; she would have resented it had I kept it longer; as it was, she took it with a faint smile of thanks

and vanished. I returned to the house, determined not ungratefully to neglect so promising an opening, and to make some inquiries which should enable me the next time we met to know better what to make of so unaccountable a phenomenon. On inquiring, I found, as I was sure I should, that she was a lady; a lady be it known, of better family, by a great many steps, than we *libertino patre nati*. She is the daughter of an old lieutenant who died here a few years back; who, because he served his king like a gentleman, and never troubled himself to bow down and worship the golden image of Cheapside and the Stock Exchange, had fallen under the displeasure of that Divinity, and been summoned out of life, leaving his daughter to the tender mercies of the world. My aunt, good charitable soul, with a heart overflowing with pity, and a mind, with true Cheapside meanness in little things, keenly alive to the advantage of securing a governess for her children, without having anything to pay for her, took her to live here at Belmont. Truly a sweet life, to live with the servants, and to teach the children to be ladies, to be reminded three times a day by my aunt, of the infinite debt of gratitude she

owes to her, to be hated alike by the whole household, because she is graceful, beautiful, and refined, and they are all alike odious, vulgar, and detestable, and because her persevering sweetness will continue to pour the fire drops of patience and kindness on them in spite of their ill treatment; really the Carpenters have run up so very long an account the wrong side of the book, that I, as the future representative of the family, think I can do no better than pay it all off by anticipation, and throw myself, and all that I have or shall have, at her feet. It is no great sacrifice. I believe, if the truth is known, the balance will be found her side of the score still, for what am I, or what have I, that I can have a right to hope for so exquisite a creature? I have not spoken to her since, but I am wildly in love with her. I see her continually with my cousins, but she has never given me an opportunity of exchanging a word with her, and scarcely even of catching her eye; but evening after evening I stray about the garden and the summer-house, and fortune by-and-bye will smile on truth and patience. I will write again in a few days.

"Yours affectionately,

"H. C."

Three weeks later—a fragment extatic.

"Catherine loves me,—yes, she loves me,—she has told me so. Our lips have touched each other; how long they hung there, God knows, I know not. It was but one long thrilling moment of extacy. Time was not for us, for those are no earthborn enjoyments, but true children of heaven; and we hung entranced in a flash of the everliving now of eternity. What is life to me now? O Hardaway! Hardaway! how does the burning truth shoot over me now of the inspired words of the old prophets, who teach us that love was the creator of the universe; and curses on the freezing systems of our miserable heartless teaching, which scatters snow flakes on those words of fire, and pieces them out into the wiredrawn articles of our contemptible theology! That religion! That divinity! O the profanation of the holy name! What can they know, the drivelling dotards of the pulpit and the lecture-room, of the full flood tide of spirit that rolls in with the great wave of love into the free heart of man, and recreates for him the splendour of God's universe, as it was when the open secret first

glittered in unveiled magnificence before the hierarchy of heaven? I do not know myself again,—I cannot find myself again. I am God's freedman, and now for the first time I know what it is to be a man. Wisdom, truth, beauty, God, duty,—I know them all now! Verily am I now reborn of the Spirit, the child of love, whose new life now beginning shall be lovely as the lives of angels are. O! when I think what I have been. But now that is past, gone. The old Adám, the old nature. Ah! now I am free again, once again baptized in fire the heir of heaven! And Catherine . . . you, you are the means of grace, the mighty channel through which God pours this blessed gift on me. . . . Truly these messengers of heaven take forms among us, in which we children of earth are slow to find them; the God was among the herdsmen of Admetus, and they knew it not. And Catherine was here in the form of a servant; and I—I dared to think I should be bringing new life to her."

It appears our young friend had been getting up Germanesque philosophy, and conceived he had found a northwest passage into heaven. From the next letter it would seem

he had been teaching his young lady, and that her own studies had in a way manured the ground to receive it.

"Catherine is a true child of passion, she has no idea of duty when she does not love, and no sacrifice is too great for her when she does; she has known her fellow creatures only to despise them, because she has only found heartlessness, when there was the greatest pretence of respectability; and it is easy to teach her that the forms of society, which men make so much fuss about, are but modes of legalized selfishness, built together upon the theory that all mankind are trying to overreach each other; serving at best but as protection against injuries, which a pure-hearted child of nature would either be ashamed to consider injuries, or which, if they are real, can receive no compensation for. Love knows no law, because it fulfils all law; love can work no ill, and can believe none; the laws of the heart are the only laws which it is virtue to observe, and sacrilege to break. Laws written and systematized may be for the impure and the base, but they shall never hinder her from obeying what her heart tells her she may do, because they can never redress what she would

consider an injury. She has no half feeling, she cannot doubt me, because she loves me; and so long as she has my love, she cares for nothing else.

"To a heart which has for a long time been thrown in upon itself, and been forced by the hardness or unkindliness of the element into which it has been cast to live and feel for itself only, to a mind which since it has learnt to think has never known a friend, the first word of sympathy from without, is like the kiss which awoke the enchanted sleeper. It has but been in a dream before—it only becomes conscious of itself, when it sees its own reflection in the mind of another. This is why books can do so little; they only tell you what others have thought and suffered; nothing of what you are thinking and suffering; only here and there you fall across some feature you recognize as your own, but you find it linked on to others that are as strange to you, and so it merely perplexes you the more. Catherine only sees herself in me, neither thought nor feeling can go alone yet. Her spirit's baby children prattle along holding by my hand; now and then I have to carry them in my arms, when they are tired, and

sometimes take the mother's office too, and nurse them at my heart, as by-and-bye, please God, she will do for my bodily children; but that is to be, and the time is not yet ripe. In the mean time, she loves me, and must love me, because she only exists through me, and it is my highest pleasure to be her guide and teacher: and all her visions, which till now have only been flitting before her, I have been able to call out into an expressed faith of the most beautiful kind.

"What are all these laws and restrictions by which the simplest and most innocent actions are fenced in and restrained, but a school which teaches us to sin by destroying the loving confidence which, if we were left to ourselves, would of itself compel us to all that is best and loveliest? Who would ever have thought of killing his brother, except the law had suggested it to him, by insisting that he should not? Because these miserable negatives are so bedrilled into us, we learn to believe that there is a necessity for it, and men become wicked in fact, because they are taught they have a tendency to become so; we distrust our neighbours, and our neighbours distrust us; but destroy suspicion, and

you destroy the cause of it; assume that there is no sin and can be no such thing, and the spectre will vanish out of the world with the belief in it. This is the style of our conversation, and this is Catherine's morality, pure and noble-minded as she is, she can live by it, and she shall live by it; and if it be a dream it is too beautiful for me to spoil with my matter-of-fact detail of the depravity of mankind. After all, it is, you know, true ideally. It should be so; noble minds can even now live and die by it, and Catherine's purity shall new inspire mine. To her, as she is, I at least feel I can never be untrue. I know myself, and I can trust myself; married or unmarried, she knows no difference. The form that a priest can read would not tinge her cheek with one hue of happier brightness, because it could add nothing to her security. She supposes I must wish it, because I have to live in the world, and the childish prejudices of our fellow-mortals might be in the way of our doing all the good we are by-and-bye to do together. But for herself she would not marry me at all if she felt even the shadow of a wish for it as a protection; and so we sail on, as yet I know not whither. The cloud that

hangs over the future makes it even more intensely alluring, and I leave to time to develope in its own way what it is beyond my skill to unravel, and what it is most likely I should only spoil by intefering with. We are the sport of destiny; you and I, and all of us. To-day has had its own incidents, to-morrow has a fresh store to come. Dragged through them we must be, as we have been; and the day after them too will belong to the past. It is only our own ignorance of it, that make the future seem uncertain. . . . When I shall leave this, I know not; what I shall do, I know not, and do not care to know. I crave, and yet I hang back: why, I cannot tell. I cannot, O no, I do not doubt myself."

And so rises the cloud castle, which when the wind changes, will tremble into ruins. He, wretched fool, deceiving and deceived; knowing at his heart his own emptiness, yet dreaming too that he believes what he is saying; she, simple and untaught, having lost at the hour of need the hand which should have led her the

way that she should go, falling across this mock sun, and dazzled by its wordy brightness, listens to all this, and because she loves him, dreams she understands. Love holds her heart, and his tongue has bewildered her uneducated conscience. She cannot choose but believe him, as he sweeps her on to perdition; she has never known a teacher; she has wandered at her own wild will in the garden of the poets. She has never seen a flower fade, and dreams that it is spring for ever. . . .

"And what," I said, turning to my genius as the papers I seemed to hold passed out of form and melted into cloud; "what is this wretched girl's own early history, what miserable sin has she, or what have her fathers committed, that she was plunged so into this inevitable destruction?"

"Neither had she sinned, nor her parents," answered the genius; "unless indeed it be a sin to bring children into the world at all—as perhaps it is."

"What!" I said, "are there not enough of

the worthless and the wicked in the world, if God will afflict it, to bear his judgments, without dragging out this poor innocent child, and plunging her in a net of circumstances, into an ocean of guilt!"

"When circumstances compel, there is no guilt," replied the genius. "But it is not the least idle of the dreams of you mortals that you prescribe to Providence the way that it shall go, and murmur if it does not obey you. You make such a prating in your sermons and philosophies, about God's way in punishing vice and rewarding virtue, and you forget altogether that it is you men that do it and not He. He does not strike the tyrant with his thunderbolts; the conspirator assassinates him. You punish what on the whole interferes with your enjoyment, and reward what furthers it; to make your system respectable you call it divine; and then when anything falls out you find it hard to reconcile with your theories, you are like to turn infidels. . . Listen, however, to her history.

"The father of Catherine Gray was one of Nelson's old lieutenants. He had no interest, and only common merit. He always did his

duty, that is, he always did whatever he was told to do. Had he ever been thrown into circumstances which called for anything more, he might have shown himself equal to them; but as he never was, he continued to serve in ship after ship plain Lieutenant Grey. A man who did his every-day duties in an every-day way, was never mentioned in dispatches; and at the peace was considered sufficiently rewarded by his country with a coast-guard lieutenancy at Exmouth. Here, with fifty years and an old uniform upon his shoulders, his pay, and his pockets tolerably lined with prize-money from a lucky last cruize, he considered his quarters and his daily allowance large enough for one more besides himself; and forgetting that in such cases one and one might not make a simple sum of addition, he married the daughter of an old brother officer, with a pretty face and true sailor-daughter's heart for her only recommendation. Old Gray was as young on his wedding-day as he was the first time he was ever cut down in his middy's hammock; and the light-hearted maxim of his life was, Look out for to-day, and to-morrow will look out for itself. . . They spent their prize-money in a

honey-moon, which this time was kind enough to take longer than usual on its sky journey, giving them six weeks of itself instead of four; and at the end of it they came back to live in their little whitewashed cottage, with its door and two windows down stairs, and three windows in a row up stairs; and the lieutenant's ten shillings a day to keep two backs covered from the rays of the sun and the eyes of their fellow mortals, and three stomachs (for they had ventured, imprudent people, on an old woman for the kitchen department), with three breakfasts, three dinners, and three teas daily; and the backs were always covered, and the various meals came regularly on the table; and where could you find a couple over whom the wheels of life ran lighter or more smoothly, as he would sit in his porch on a summer evening before the door and smoke his long Dutch pipe, and weave his little wife long stories of the mad exploits of himself and her father, when they first sailed together in the little Firefly. And she would sit opposite and knit her old husband his worsted overalls against the long rough nights of winter; or if a lucky seizure had enabled her to indulge in so pardonable a vanity, bind a few smart slips of ribbon into her Sunday bonnet.

"There were times indeed when he was out upon his watch, and his eyes as they fell upon the sea marked the shadows of the clouds staining with their inky spots the deep bright green, that a shade would pass too across the old man's mind, as he thought of the small handful of sand that most likely remained for him in his life-glass, and his poor wife left alone in the wide world, with none to love or to take care of her. . . And the clouds came oftener, and the smile in the morning at breakfast played less freely on his lips, after she had whispered to him one night, half happy and half frightened, that another little soul, before spring came again, might perhaps be sent down into their family. . . And then in the dark hour, the old man would go wipe his spectacles, and take down the big old Bible and open it at random, and the first text he lit upon would be sure to be a messenger of peace to him. . . . He had always feared God and done his duty, and the seed of the righteous, he would find, were never left to beg their bread. And so he smoked his pipe and took comfort, and trusted that if it pleased the Allmerciful to call him away out of

life, He would find some means of showing pity on those he left behind him. . . And the winter came, and the spring was coming, and God did provide for his poor wife, though not exactly in the way the lieutenant had wished and hoped for. . . . No worthy relative died and left them money; no Admiralty news of his own promotion came to lighten his troubles and lay another epaulette upon his shoulders; but a few hours after she had left a little lady upon the bed to bear her name and fill her place on earth, God took her away and gave her promotion into heaven. . . Poor fellow! he had loved his little Catherine with his old boy heart, with a true boy's love; and no young wooer ever mourned a lost mistress with a deeper or truer sorrow. . He felt as a man might who had toiled through a long weary voyage all alone in a little boat. Towards an evening he had reached what seemed safe harbourage, the high land round him and between him and the broad sea; but in the morning, wakes to find his high land was but cloud-bank, and his harbourage a coral reef, and the wide weary infinite of ocean all around him still.

"The lieutenant had seen death in many awful forms; he had faced him in the thunder of the battle and the war of the tempest; he had been at the storming of great cities, and seen young wives dragged off the bodies of their murdered husbands, and done to death at their sides in a way too horrible to speak of. . . He had heard from his berth—well for him it was not his watch—he had heard the shriek from the deck of a returning Indiaman, mixed with crash of timber and falling spars, as his own proud tyrant ship had struck her, and she went down under the keel of the destroyer; yet it seemed as if he had never known what death was, till he saw life and death so fearfully contrasted on that little bed; the tiny infant stretching its little hands towards the mother's breasts, which were not yet cold; one might have thought the soul had not left the earth, but, chrysalis-like, the old shell had broken when the new body was ready to receive its life, and the soul of the mother was living still in the person of the child. . . So came the little Catherine into the world: the child of sorrow. The angel of death who was sent on an errand so unlovely, wrecked his anger on the innocent

cause of his coming. As he passed away with the mother's soul he turned to frown upon the child; and if those say true who tell us that the forecast of its destiny is written on the features of the new-born infants, the father might have read a strange tale of misery in the painful glances of those new-awakened baby eyes.

"Howbeit no such misgivings occurred to the lieutenant; he was too much absorbed in the thought of what he had lost to pay much attention to what had been left him in her place; and when the first gush of sorrow was over, and he could ask to have his child brought for him to see, the cloud had passed away, and the tiny creature looked into his face and smiled. . And March and April rolled past, and the spring came up upon the earth in all its beauty, and the sea was clear and the sky was blue; the choral birds morning and evening chanted their thanksgivings to the goddess of the May, and once more the sun shone in upon the old man's heart, and he too could thank God for what God had given, and bow his head in resignation for what had been taken away. . .

"Fourteen years sped away fast as your own

first fourteen years seem to have sped as you look back on them,—fourteen years of calm unclouded sky; while the beauties of autumn and of spring grew together in the little cottage, the silver cord of the lieutenant's life slackening slowly as he melted off towards the winter of the grave; and young Catherine's rosebuds swelling year by year into fuller and fresher beauty. Some part of his little income the father sank year by year in the insurance office for his child's use after he was gone; and as the future seemed in that way provided for, what more time God might please to let him continue upon earth, he could spend carelessly in the fulfilment of his then easy duty; and in tranquil expectation of the hour when he should have earned his discharge, and be let go with a retiring pension into heaven. . . . The motherless Catherine nature adopted for her child, and nature seemed the only schoolmistress she had the patience to learn from. There was a day-school at Exmouth, which for several years she used to attend, and very rapidly she contrived to pick up a smattering of the common things which were taught there; a little French and English, and music enough to enable her to

sing, in her own wild way, the old romantic ballads she had gathered out of such books as were not school-books, which she could come across. But she liked best to chase the goats over the cliffs and the butterflies in the cowslip meadows, or to sit under the flag-staff with her father's men and hear them tell their wild stories of savage life in the glorious islands of the southern seas. . . . And they would teach her their high soul-stirring war songs of the ocean, which she would go pour into the delighted ears of her happy father, as night after night in the fine weather he would sit and smoke his pipe in the old jessamine porch, and she would now fill it for him as her mother used to do.

"Time speeds swiftly when the road is smooth, and only limps and stumbles over the rocks and stones; and sailors seldom see their three-score years and ten, for the rough seas shake the sand in their life-glass, and it runs quicker than that of other men. . . . The lieutenant's sixty-fourth birthday past and he was never to see another. He might, perhaps, have lingered out the fine-drawn thread one more, perhaps another, had not the frown of Catherine's evil angel whetted the scissons of the fates, and

misfortune abruptly severed it. The insurance office, where his forty pounds a year was to have secured a provision for his daughter, suddenly stopped payment. The dishonesty of one of the partners, and the carelessness of the rest, had exposed the whole capital to the chance of a dangerous speculation; and it was lost utterly and irredeemably. The fibres that bound together the old man's soul and body were too feeble to bear the strain of anxiety and distress which fell upon him. . . They parted suddenly, and Catherine was left an orphan."

CHAPTER VI.

You very nearly have her history; little remains to be told. . . . Sir John and Lady Carpenter had lately come to live at Exmouth. Sir John was a retired tradesman of Cheapside. With a knighthood and three hundred thousand pounds, he existed at Exmouth, it would seem, for the sole purpose of giving his lady a title, entertaining her friends, and paying her ladyship's bills. . . In London he had been of some importance, for he was a good steady man of business, knew the interests of trade, and followed them out in the part he took in politics. In Devonshire his object was to metamorphose himself and come out as a gentleman, to endeavour, by the best dinners and the best claret, to blot out the stains of his extraction. No plumes waved higher than her ladyship's in the

well-curtained and cushioned pew on a Sunday. The gold on her Bible and Prayer-book would have given a new set of clothes to the whole Charity-school; and three scarlet footmen, with gold canes, formed her body-guard as she passed up the aisle. . . Sir John, true to the interests of his new order, paid the expenses of the election of the Conservative member, and never lost an opportunity of crying up the Corn Laws and railing at Free-trade, as the party cry of a few selfish designing money-makers. Nay, on one occasion he was so self-devoted as to sacrifice his old Cheapside self to make the present self glitter brighter by the comparison. "No one," he said, "had a better right to know what they were than he had, for he had himself once been one of them, and no motive but love of money had ever influenced him." . . . In fact, the Carpenters were the family of Exmouth; no balls were better attended; the officers of the Exeter garrison never failed; their distinguished and select parties went the round of the county papers: in short, for selfishness, uselessness, vulgarity, and ostentation, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to have provided them with rivals. . . . Two children, both girls,

filled up their social circle ; the eldest eight, the second two years younger. . . . But the Carpenters, with all their magnificence, had not thrown off their trading habits; and extravagantly profuse as they were in large matters when there was eclât to be got for it, they were as extravagantly mean in trifling ones ; a feature in their character which involved them in many petty difficulties, as they particularly wished to be considered charitable,—the very father and mother of benevolence. True, there was not a subscription list in the county where their names did not appear. Yet people often observed the sums were rather insignificant. This, however, they contrived in a way to obviate, by dividing their donations ; and, instead of Sir John's name appearing with the whole, his lady's stood elsewhere in the list at full length besides, contriving so to double the display without adding to the expense.

It was under this good lady's eye that our Catherine had the fortune to fall. . . . The orphan's friend was a delightful title; what honour would she not get on earth by it, and what an angel would she not be by-and-bye in heaven! What if she was to take her to live

with her little girls? Catherine was very pretty, quite clever enough, and had learned enough for them at any rate to begin upon. . . Understanding whispered it would save the expense of a governess. The very thing. She talked the matter over with her lady's-maid in the morning; with Sir John at the twelve-o'clock breakfast; and in the evening Catherine, who was still too much stunned, stupefied by her father's loss, to know or care what was done with her, was in the hands of her ladyship's housekeeper. . . .

"And that is all," said the genius to me. "Think it over now and link on the beginning to the end; and see if you can tell when sin came in, and she began to deserve what fell upon her. Is not rather the idea of "deserving" but a dream? and does not one thing follow another as it cannot choose but follow, as the grass grows when the rain falls, and withers and parches under drought? Nay, you must judge and think for yourself; do not bring your ideas to me," he said, as I was going to interrupt him. "I show you what I have to show you; it is for you to leave it or to profit by it.

"I have another scene for you before we part."

And again we were in the old Exmouth churchyard. It was daylight now, and all the birds were singing; and the sun was shining, and the bells were pealing, and a thousand bright eyes were flashing from the tiny waves as they danced in the light before the summer breeze.

A pyramid of gaudy streamers were floating up the flag-staff; and the king's cutter, which lay under the hill, was trailing her broad banner over her stern. The church door was open, some service was just over, for the bells only began to ring as we settled down there, and a troop of people were coming filing out of the porch. They seemed most of them to be the coastguard men, by their round jackets and anchor buttons, and trousers white as swan-down. Their wives and children were all with them, all in holiday costume; and the men had roses in their button-holes, and the women and children nosegays in their hands, and many shouts of laughter came ringing out of the group of bright and sunny faces. A nurse with a baby in her arms, swathed carefully in at least

a hundred shawls and wrappers, though it was burning July, made her way through an opening in the crowd, amidst a shower of wishes of good luck, accounting in a way for the collection there, and walked rapidly with her charge across the fields, to the white cottage at the station. A clergyman shortly followed out of the church, and close after him, a gentleman in a naval officer's uniform; and could I believe my senses? a lady they seemed to tell me was the same Catherine, with a little boy some two years old, holding on by her glove.

The clergyman shook the officer warmly by the hand.

"May you know many such happy days, my dear captain," he said; "and may I live to offer many children of yours to God in this church."

"Ah, there is the cutter with her flags out, and the station too; what a pleasure it must be to you, to see yourself so beloved, your happiness so shared in by all these people."

"Thank you, Doctor; I believe, though, I may thank my little wife for it," answered the captain; "she is the men's darling. She has grown up among them, and lived among them, and the old sailors love her as their own child.

I am pretty well, but I am not what her father was to them; I fancy I owe most of their favours to my having had him for my father-in law."

"And this is your little boy, the Doctor said, pinching the rosy cheek between his fore and middle finger." "Bless me how he grows, a sailor every inch of him; true sailor lad, he has the quarter-deck walk already. Let me see, how old is he? dear dear, yes indeed, two years last month. Yes, he was born the week before his grandfather died. How time flies! Are we to have you long with us, captain?"

"That is as it pleases our good Lords of the Admiralty," he replied. "It is five years now since I came; you know I was put on when the force was increased, as a sort of extra superintending officer, and I have heard nothing of my being superseded; you may be sure I shall not seek it. It would break Catherine's heart to go away, and I can be well enough contented to live and die at the place which first gave her to me. To be sure, what a providence it was I was ever sent here at all. It happened just when they wanted an officer here, that my friends had applied for something to be given

me to do, and as there was not any ship in the way, I was posted off here; what a chance these things turn upon!

"It was much against my will, I can tell you, Catherine; I was sulky enough about it, till I had to come here and take up my quarters with your father; and then you know you managed to reconcile me to my fate. . . . Dear old man, what a brave heart there was in him, and how he bore up against his many troubles! That business with the insurance office, Catherine; he told me many times, his anxieties for you then were like to have made an end of him, and it was only God's mercy that they didn't; and so it was God's mercy, dear Catherine, for if he had not lived, I should never have known you, and some other lucky fellow might have worn my jewel."

"See, madam," the Doctor said, "the very dead are smiling to-day; those pretty children have dressed your father's grave in flowers. How does death lose his terrors, and change into the sweetness of sleep, when it is made beautiful so by children's hands."

The grave mounds were fenced in by a little row of wooden crosses; fresh gathered

roses and lilies hung from one to the other in long festoons; and down between them were sleeping these two in sweet and blessed peace; they had suffered in life, they had borne some pain together upon earth, and they had borne the sharper pain of separation; but now they lay there together never more to part, and on their crosses hung no longer crowns of thorns, but wreathes of sweetest flowers.

"Follow them," the genius whispered, as the three moved slowly across the churchyard towards the spot.

"The inscription," he said again, as I hung behind the pensive group . . . "read it."

I did so; it was the same, word and word the same, but with this one difference. The old man had outlived the date I had first read five summers; and sixty-nine, not sixty-four, marked the number of the year of his pilgrimage."

O God! and that was all; five links hung on upon the chain, and the shadow of the father's life had held aloof the blistering footsteps of sorrow and of sin, and the child's path lay along through a garden of roses, into a life of virtue, and an end of peace.

"And which is true?" I asked.

"Come with me to the light, and I will show you," he replied. I staggered after him, behind drawn curtains to the open light of day, the cool sea breeze played upon my face, and woke me to life and reason. I had crawled to the open window of my bed-room, and my eyes were on the wide sheet of the Atlantic, and the peaks of Achill were purpling in the rising sun.

THE END.

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